



## Fort Stanwix National Monument *Transportation Summary Report*



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## Report notes

This report was prepared by the U.S. Department of Transportation John A. Volpe National Transportation Systems Center, in Cambridge, Massachusetts. The project team was led by Benjamin Rasmussen, of the Planning and Policy Analysis Division, and included Eric Plosky of the Service and Operations Assessment Division, and Carson Poe, also of the Planning and Policy Analysis Division.

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## Definitions

The following terms are used in this report:

AADT	Average Annual Daily Traffic
ADA	Americans with Disabilities Act
ANCA	Adirondack North Country Association
AT	Alternative transportation
ATP	Alternative Transportation Program
ATS	Alternative Transportation System
BBS	Birnie Bus Service
CBD	Central Business District
CLR	Cultural Landscape Report
CNYRTA	Central New York Regional Transportation Authority
DCP/EA	Development Concept Report/Environmental Assessment
DOT	Department of Transportation
ESPA	Empire State Passengers Association
GMP	General Management Plan
HOCTS	Herkimer-Oneida Counties Transportation Study
MPO	Metropolitan Planning Organization
MVHCC	Mohawk Valley Heritage Corridor Commission
NEPA	National Environmental Policy Act
NPS	National Park Service
NYSDOT	New York State Department of Transportation
PMIS	Project Management Information System
PPP	Preliminary Planning Project
REACH	Rome Entertainment, Arts, Cultural and Historic
TAG	Transportation Assistance Group
VSP	Visitor Services Project

## Overview

Fort Stanwix is located in the City of Rome, Oneida County, along the main east-west transportation corridor of upstate New York (Figure 1). This corridor initially developed along natural river systems, reinforced through construction of the Erie Canal, and later, railroads and the New York State Thruway.

**Figure 1**  
**Location of Fort Stanwix National Monument**

Source: NPS ; Mohawk Valley Heritage Corridor



The development of Rome originally centered on Dominick and James Street, prior to the construction of the Erie Canal. Through massive urban renewal projects begun in the 1960s, including the reconstruction of Fort Stanwix, the historic downtown was in large part replaced by new, larger urban blocks, a pedestrian mall on Dominick Street, and less dense development. Planning by the City of Rome is underway to reinvigorate the downtown core. To that end, the city has removed the pedestrian mall and reintroduced vehicular traffic to that section of Dominick Street.

Nearly 22.5 million people live within a 200-mile radius of the fort—on average, a three and one-half hour drive. Twenty-five per cent of the U.S. and Canadian population are within a day's drive of the fort; New York City is 264 miles away, Montreal and Toronto roughly 300 miles, Ottawa 235 miles and Boston 231 miles. Syracuse, the nearest large city, is 35 miles away. Albany and Binghamton are roughly 100 miles away, and Buffalo, is 200 miles away.

### Project Overview

The primary purpose of this project is to conduct an inventory and review of the myriad transportation plans and studies completed or underway by local and governments and other regional stakeholders that affect and have implications for Fort Stanwix. The report represents a summary of the plans and studies organized by topic, which are in turn divided into three sub-sections: Current Conditions, Future Conditions, and Considerations and Recommendations.

**Figure 2**  
**Location of Fort Stanwix in relation to downtown Rome and adjacent area**

Source: NPS



**Fort Stanwix and the City of Rome, New York**

Fort Stanwix National Monument  
 U. S. Department of the Interior  
 National Park Service



Draft General Management Plan  
 November 2005

Transportation has always played an important role at the fort, with multimodal access by canals, rail lines, trails, and roads. While each of these modes continue to connect to the fort, most visitors travel by automobile and take advantage of free and low cost parking around the monument. Two bus pullouts serve the park and tour buses generally park in a nearby surface parking lot. Non-motorized access is playing an increasingly important role as efforts progress to link the fort with local and regional trail systems, and the City of Rome makes pedestrian and bicycle connections to the fort from their newly refurbished multimodal center.

By virtue of its location, Fort Stanwix serves as the “town common” (Figure 2) and is an important economic driver and strategic partner with the City of Rome and stakeholders throughout the region. The City of Rome, Oneida and Herkimer Counties metropolitan planning organization (MPO), Fort Stanwix, and other public and non-profit groups have conducted studies regarding transportation opportunities to connect attractions within the city and region. The impetus for these studies is due in part to the decrease in population due to the loss of manufacturing jobs in recent years and the need to shift to a tourism-based economy focused on the region’s heritage. As this shift occurs, regional stakeholders are looking to Fort Stanwix and NPS for assistance in bringing more visitors to the region and making transportation improvements to connect regional attractions and increase visitor safety and enjoyment.

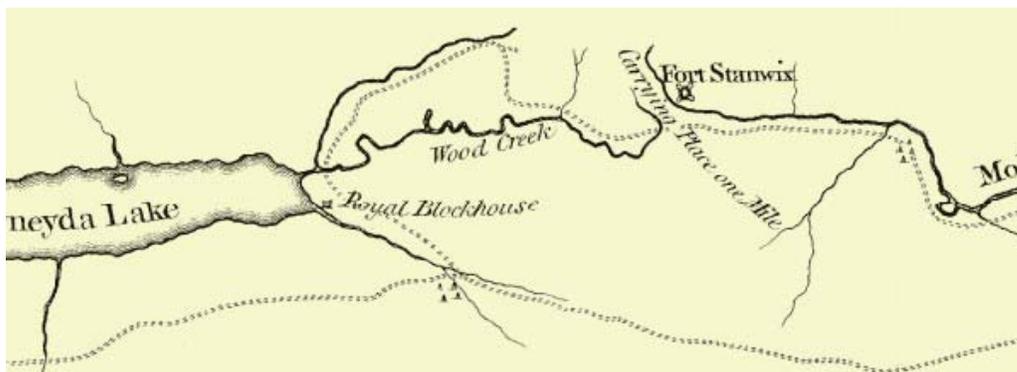
### Fort Stanwix National Monument

Fort Stanwix National Monument is located in the City of Rome, Oneida County, along the main east-west corridor of upstate New York. This corridor initially developed along natural riverine and geologic systems, the importance of which were then reinforced through construction of the Erie Canal, and, later, railroads and the New York State Thruway.

The history of the fort is intricately tied to the region’s transportation system and westward expansion. Fort Stanwix was the largest and most important of the forts lining the strategic waterway between Oswego and Schenectady in upstate New York. It was originally constructed to guard the "Oneida Carrying Place," a portage where the Mohawk River, which leads to the Hudson River and New York Harbor, approaches Wood Creek and provides access to Lake Ontario. This vital portage was controlled by the Oneida Nation and situated in the territory of the Iroquois, a powerful six-nation Native American confederacy. After a religiously sanctioned “Great Peace,” circa 1500, ended chronic conflicts, the resulting political federation enabled the Iroquois confederacy to take full advantage of their position along vital transportation routes. However, their power and central location inevitably drew the Iroquois nations into the prolonged international struggle between Great Britain and France, already established in the St. Lawrence and Ohio valleys. During the French and Indian War, the British built a series of forts to help protect their supply lines. Fort Stanwix was built in 1758 during the war (Figure 3).

**Figure 3**  
**The Oneida Carrying Place with Oneida Lake to the west and the Mohawk River to the east**

Source: NPS



By the end of the French and Indian War, the fort was only sparsely manned. The fort assumed some strategic importance in 1766 due to Pontiac's Rebellion, and later the 1768 treaty of Fort Stanwix was signed there. The American Revolution again highlighted the military importance of the fort site. In 1776, American rebels in their war for independence occupied Fort Stanwix and began rebuilding the decayed structure to defend the frontier, support their Oneida and Tuscarora allies, and exert influence among the other Iroquois. In 1777, an army of British troops laid siege to the fort, but were held off. This victory helped set the stage for the American victory at Saratoga. The fort was maintained until near the end of the war and, though abandoned around 1781, blockhouses were built in 1783 and 1784. In 1784, the United States negotiated the Treaty of Fort Stanwix, which forced the Iroquois who had sided with the British to give up much of their land.

Euroamerican settlement in the Rome area began after 1785 with the survey of the Oriskany patent. William Livingston and Alida Hoffman acquired a 460-acre parcel, which included the site of Fort Stanwix. The parcel was sold to Dominick Lynch, who established the settlement of Lynchville (renamed Rome in 1819). The site of Fort Stanwix became the focus for Rome's industrial, commercial, and residential development. The fort site was close to both the Erie and Black River Canals, and the New York Central Railroad crossed the canals near the site. The fort site itself was a mixed residential and commercial district throughout the 19th century. Gradually, evidence of the fort disappeared under city development. In 1802, the earthworks were still standing. In 1815, the blockhouse for military stores was still standing, and the northeast bastion was used as the town dump. By 1830, the fort site had been leveled.

Today's Fort Stanwix National Monument is a reconstructed Revolutionary War-era fort that was built on the site of the original Fort Stanwix. The site was established as a national monument in 1935, but fort reconstruction did not commence until 1974, when an archeological study by NPS was completed. Five square blocks of downtown Rome was demolished to clear the site for the reconstruction. The reconstructed fort opened to the public in 1976, exhibiting a portion of the extensive archeological collections found on-site. The National Monument site occupies approximately 16 acres and is bordered by main thoroughfares surrounded by a mixture of commercial, residential, light industrial, and institutional land uses, none of which were present during the fort's period of occupation. The site of the fort, but not the reconstructed structure, is listed in the National Register of Historic Places and is a National Historic Landmark, significant for the events that transpired there and their role in the American Revolution.

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**Figure 4**

**A school group outside the Marinus Willett Collections Management and Education Center**

Source: Volpe Center, 2006



The reconstructed fort consists of an earth and timber-clad, reinforced concrete structure that surrounds three freestanding buildings. Located within the reconstructed fort, there is one remaining original feature – the foundation of a brick hearth. Several structures that were proposed in the 1967 master plan (see below) have not been reconstructed. The fort is closed to the public during the winter months but the recently constructed Marinus Willett Collections Management and Education Center (Figure 4) is open year-round.

The Willett Center, named for the heroic officer who was second-in-command of the fort during the 1777 siege, opened in the summer of 2005 and serves as the park's primary visitor orientation, education, and collections management facility. It enhances the operations, collections management, education and interpretation of Fort Stanwix National Monument. Within the facility are exhibits, audiovisual presentations, a bookstore, and a climate-controlled museum collections storage area for 450,000 objects.

There are a number of sites located within a day's drive of the fort, including cultural resources and landscapes that are related to the siege of Fort Stanwix and the other military actions that took place in this region, such as Saratoga National Historical Park in Stillwater, New York, and Oriskany Battlefield State Historic Site in nearby Whitestown.

### **Creating Fort Stanwix National Monument**

Fort Stanwix National Monument was authorized by Public Law No. 74-291 [s.739] of August 21, 1935 [see 16 U.S.C. 450 l-n] in order to preserve “. . . for public use historic sites, buildings and objects of national significance for the benefit and inspiration of the people.” Although the legislation further states that the Secretary may designate some or all of the Fort Stanwix site (including the buildings and other property located there) as is “necessary or desirable for national monument purposes,” no formal boundaries have ever been established.

At the time of its national monument designation, the site was examined and the National Park Service recommended that a monument not be built on the site, but, instead, that a marker be placed. No further action was taken at Fort Stanwix until the site of the fort was designated a National Historic Landmark in November 1962 and a bronze marker was placed on the site in 1963. In the mid-1960s, officials of the City of Rome requested that the National Park Service provide the city with advice on development of the fort as a part of planned urban renewal.

New York Governor Nelson A. Rockefeller signed a bill on July 14, 1965, that gave the City of Rome authority to purchase land so that development of the fort could get under way. Concurrently, the NPS prepared a master plan for administering, protecting, and developing Fort Stanwix National Monument. This master plan was completed in 1967.

The city's urban renewal program cleared approximately 70 structures and five streets from the fort site to prepare for reconstruction. Full title to the fort site was conveyed to the federal government in 1973. Groundbreaking for the fort reconstruction project was held on August 23, 1974. Reconstruction of the fort was based on extensive archeological and historical research that was largely completed between 1970 and 1973.

Archeologists continued to salvage archeology during 1974 and 1975 while the fort was being rebuilt. The first phase of reconstruction was completed in 1976, in time to open the fort for the nation's bicentennial celebration. The fort was opened to the public on March 10, 1976, and was dedicated in a ceremony held on May 22, 1976.

## Document Overview

Below is a list of the documents and resources that were reviewed as part of this project:

- City of Rome, *Comprehensive Plan* (2003) – This plan represents the culmination of the City of Rome’s two-year comprehensive master planning effort. Included in the Comprehensive Plan is an Action Plan component that is intended to provide city leaders and other stakeholders, both current and future, with guidance regarding the kind of place residents would like Rome to become. Also included are three catalyst projects and implementation strategies that will facilitate the accomplishment of each goal. These catalyst projects are: 1) Rome Family Recreation Campus, 2) Central Business District Improvements, and 3) Main Street Corridors. All of these catalyst projects integrate Fort Stanwix to varying degrees. The plan focuses on investments in human, technological, educational, financial, and physical infrastructure with the goal of creating economic opportunity, achieving high levels of employment, and quality jobs.
- City of Rome, *Urban Design Plan: Connecting Rome’s Waterfront* (2006) – The Urban Design Plan was completed in May 2006. The New York State Department of Transportation (DOT) and the City of Rome funded this plan, and the Rome Main Streets Alliance had an involved role in crafting the plan, which is consistent with the city’s Comprehensive Plan. The Urban Design Plan covers three corridors in detail: 1) East Dominick to Nock Street, 2) West Dominick to Arsenal, and 3) North James Street. The plan also discusses the development of multi-use trails and Bellamy Harbor Park.
- City of Rome, *Wayfinding Plan: Connecting Rome’s Waterfront* (2006) – The Wayfinding Plan was also completed in May 2006 and is a component of the Urban Design Plan. The defined project area for this plan includes West Dominick Street, East Dominick Street, and North and South James Street. The plan focuses on the role of a signage program to complement streetscape development and the promotion of attractions downtown.
- Empire State Passengers Association, *A Vision for Passenger Rail and Public Transportation in New York State 2004 – 2008* (2004) – The Empire State Passengers Association (ESPA), a 1,400 member rail user advocacy group, introduced its first Five Year Plan for Passenger Rail Improvements in New York State in 1996 with a subsequent update in 2000. This document represents ESPA’s most recent version of the plan, which contributes to its ongoing mission of improving passenger rail service and public transportation in New York.
- Herkimer-Oneida Counties Transportation Study, *HOCTS Long Range Transportation Plan: Destinations 2005-2025* (2004) – The Herkimer-Oneida Counties Transportation Study (HOCTS) is the region’s metropolitan planning organization (MPO), which is responsible for distributing transportation funding in the region. This plan defines the goals and objectives for transportation within Oneida-Herkimer Counties. Included within these goals and objectives are providing transportation improvements and services that will enhance tourism development in the region and improve circulation for bicycles and pedestrians.
- National Park Service, *Draft Environmental Assessment: Marinus Willett Center* (2003) – The assessment-of-alternatives document was completed in 2003 and construction began on the selected development plan in early 2004. In its analysis of alternatives for developing the Willett Center, this document discusses the history of the fort and the site as well as the possible impacts of the development of the Willett Center on surrounding areas.

- National Park Service, *Northern Frontier Special Resource Study* (2002) – Related to Fort Stanwix National Monument, this regional initiative assessed options for formal heritage-related designation of the Northern Frontier area, encompassing part or all of ten counties between Schenectady and Oswego, New York. This report also recognizes both the historic significance of Fort Stanwix and its role as a central attraction in the Mohawk Valley region. The recommendations of this study emphasize in-depth interpretation of Iroquois colonial history, and could serve as a foundation for administrative, cultural resources, and interpretive programming that would effectively link the fort to the heritage resources of the region. The entire report is available on-line at <http://fla.esf.edu/research/NPS/NF%20Report.htm>.
- National Park Service, *Fort Stanwix National Monument General Management Plan and Environmental Impact Statement* (Draft, 2005) – This document serves two functions: 1) it is a Draft General Management Plan (GMP) for Fort Stanwix National Monument and 2) it is also a Draft Environmental Impact Statement, which assesses the probable impacts of the proposed plan and alternatives to it. The purpose of the GMP is to define the basic management philosophy that will guide park management decisions over the next 15 to 20 years and to direct the actions required to support that philosophy. This document describes the conditions and experiences that currently occur at Fort Stanwix and those that should exist in the near future.
- National Park Service, *Fort Stanwix National Monument Visitors Study* (2003) – This report describes the results of a visitor study at Fort Stanwix from July 24-30, 2003. A total of 317 questionnaires were distributed to visitors. Visitors returned 216 questionnaires for a 67.8% response rate.
- National Park Service, *Erie Canalway National Heritage Corridor, Manifest for a 21st Century Canalway, Highlights of the Draft Preservation and Management Plan* (2005) – The Erie Canalway National Heritage Corridor Act created the Erie Canalway National Heritage Corridor, which applies to all 234 municipalities adjoining the 524 miles of navigable waterway that comprise the New York State Canal System, the historic alignments of these canals, and related navigable lakes. The City of Rome, astride the Erie Canal, is included within the boundary of the national heritage corridor. The purpose of the plan is to offer guidance to the Erie Canalway National Heritage Corridor Commission and its partners—federal and state agencies, individual communities, nonprofit and private organizations—in formulating policies and taking action to achieve the National Heritage Corridor’s full potential. The full version of the plan is available at: [http://www.eriecanalway.org/EC\\_commission\\_documents.asp?area=com](http://www.eriecanalway.org/EC_commission_documents.asp?area=com)
- National Park Service, *Traffic, Circulation and Linkages Report: Fort Stanwix National Monument and Oriskany Battlefield Historic Site* (1999) – This report broadly covers the issues of traffic, circulation, and linkages as related to the last approved GMP. The report surveys existing conditions, which include major transportation routes leading to Fort Stanwix and Oriskany Battlefield with regard to ease of travel and parking and pedestrian circulation at both sites. The report also describes current New York State Department of Transportation (NYSDOT) projects, scenic highway routes, and trail systems, and the report concludes with recommendations for future projects.
- National Park Service, *Preliminary Planning Project (PPP) Trip Report – Fort Stanwix National Monument* (2004) – In September of 2004, a Transportation Assistance Group (TAG) from the NPS Alternative Transportation Program (ATP) visited Fort Stanwix to review a Project Management Information System (PMIS) proposal for an alternative transportation planning study and to make recommendations for how to move forward in terms of the feasibility of the proposed study and funding recommendations through ATP. After analyzing current conditions at the fort and in surrounding areas, the TAG recommended that the fort submit a PMIS request for GMP transportation planning support to develop a Summary Transportation Report and transportation section of the draft GMP—the result of which was, ultimately, this document.

- New York State Canal Corporation, *A Report on the Future of New York State Canals* (2005). In May 2005, Governor George E. Pataki unveiled a proposal to create the Erie Canal Greenway, an initiative to establish a regional approach to land-use planning, tourism, recreational trail development and other collaborative projects along the New York State Canal System. Governor Pataki also outlined a vision for an Empire State Greenway, connecting the existing Hudson River Valley Greenway, the proposed Erie Canal Greenway and the Niagara River Greenway. Governor Pataki called on the Canal Corporation to form an Interagency Task Force to further develop these proposals and review existing Canal Corporation functions and duties. Twelve key recommendations of the Task Force members and elected officials, planners, business owners, and other Canal System-interest groups are summarized in this report.
- Transportation Alternatives Meeting, *Link Trail Between Oriskany Battlefield State Historic Site and NYS Canalway Trail* (2004). This short memo describes the possibility for creating a link, primarily for pedestrians, between Fort Stanwix and Oriskany Battlefield.

## Section 1: Visitation

*More visitation to the park equates to an increased need for the park to better serve its visitors through simple, yet important, transportation-related improvements.*

### Current Conditions

The reconstructed Fort Stanwix is open to the public nine months of the year and is closed January through March. The Willett Center is open twelve months a year and has helped to increase visitation 17% since opening in mid-2005. Park staff have a goal of continuing to incrementally increase visitation and appreciation of the fort.

The current annual visitation—68,000 (per the GMP)—has not resulted in adverse impacts on the park's resources and existing facilities. It is anticipated that the fort structure would be able to accommodate a doubling of visitation without negatively affecting resource conditions; however, the existing visitor/orientation center and museum would be negatively affected by increased carrying capacity.

According to the Travel Industry of America, the majority of visits to historic sites are made by automobile. Lesser-known or more geographically isolated historic sites, such as Fort Stanwix, serve a more local visitor market. Based on statistical analysis in the GMP, there is a very strong relationship between the local population and fort visitation, which further supports the premise that a substantial portion of fort visitors reside within 50 miles of the monument. Given that local residents account for nearly two out of every three visitors, the significant population decline in the Utica-Rome metropolitan area is undoubtedly a major factor in the changing levels of visitation to the fort. NPS has established a number of marketing and outreach initiatives to improve fort visitation. These efforts have primarily included discussions with local and regional tourism leaders regarding opportunities to coordinate marketing efforts.

The NPS visitor study from the summer of 2003 found that of the over 200 respondents to a questionnaire, 88% were visiting the fort for the first time in the past 12 months, 59% reported that this was their first visit in their lifetime, and 96% of visitor groups visited Fort Stanwix for just one day. Twenty percent of the American population lives within 300 miles of the area.

### Future Conditions

Visitation is expected to continue to increase at modest increments over time in line with visitation to the national park system as a whole. The Draft GMP proposes two alternatives: Alternative 1 (the No Action alternative) and Alternative 2, which includes the Willett Center.

Alternative 1 “calls for the development of a new park orientation film. A well-publicized roll-out for a new orientation film could temporarily increase visitation to the park, but would not have a significant effect on overall, long-term visitation to the park. Conversion of fort rooms from administrative uses to interpretive use could enhance visitor interest to a minor degree and extend length of stays. Therefore, it is likely that these actions could have a minimal, short-term beneficial impact on park visitation figures... Undertaking a National Park Service Visitor Services Project (VSP) could provide a modest long-term benefit in improving interpretive and educational programming, park facilities, operations, and planning.”

Alternative 2 states that “The broadened interpretive approach that would provide a substantially enhanced understanding and appreciation for Fort Stanwix and its relationship to other Northern Frontier and Mohawk Valley historical events and themes, would offer fresh appeal and attractiveness to visitors, particularly local and regional residents... (T)he Willett Center will fulfill a regional gateway function, drawing upon visitors to the Mohawk Valley State Heritage Corridor as well as those visiting Fort Stanwix. With a broadened park interpretive component at the Willett Center, supported by cooperative programs with other Northern Frontier and Mohawk Valley institutions, it is assumed at

minimum that the Willett Center programs would increase attendance by 25% in the first year of full operation.”

Under Alternative 2, park facilities, pathways, and public parking would not exceed carrying capacity on average visitor days. However, during some special events when visitation far exceeds the average, the park may need to consider ways to mitigate crowding and circulation issues to minimize damage to resources and ensure a positive visitor experience.

### **Considerations and Recommendations**

- The park will likely continue to see an increase in visitation, and most of the visitors to the park will continue to be from the area.
- Broader interpretation would enhance visitors’ understanding and appreciation for Fort Stanwix and its relationship to other Northern Frontier and Mohawk Valley historical events and themes, and would offer fresh appeal and attractiveness, particularly for local and regional residents. This may further increase visitation.
- Additional signage could help visitors who use the adjacent parking lots find the fort and start their park experience soon after they get out of their vehicle.

## Section 2: Area Attractions

*Each of the attractions described below represents an opportunity for the park to collaborate with partners to enhance the visitor experience throughout the region.*

### Current Conditions

The Rome and Oneida County area is home to numerous historic and cultural attractions in addition to Fort Stanwix. Due to Fort Stanwix’s location, the potential exists to coordinate with these attractions and create connections where possible. The City of Rome is approximately 50 miles east of Syracuse, 90 miles west of Albany, is a gateway to the Adirondack Mountains, and is accessible via three exits from the New York State Thruway (Interstate 90). The city is adjacent to the Erie Canal Recreationway, and other significant nearby attractions include Turning Stone Resort and Casino, Oriskany Battlefield, Erie Canal Village, and the locks along the Erie Canal. The visitor study from the summer of 2003 found that 47% of visitors visited the Erie Canal Village in the same trip and 25% visited the Oriskany Battlefield in the same trip.

Below is a list and short description of several attractions in the area. Table 1 lists the attractions and their distances from Fort Stanwix.

**Table 1**  
**Distance to area attractions**

Source: Volpe Center

Attraction	Distance (and direction) from Fort Stanwix
<i>Rome Historical Society Museum</i>	0 miles
<i>Rome Art and Community Center</i>	0.5 miles (northwest)
<i>Erie Canal Recreationway Trail</i>	1 mile (south)
<i>Bellamy Harbor Park</i>	1 mile (southeast)
<i>Erie Canal Village</i>	2.5 miles (southwest)
<i>Fort Rickey Children’s Discovery Zoo</i>	5 miles (southwest)
<i>Oriskany Battlefield State Historic Site</i>	6 miles (southeast)
<i>Lake Delta State Park</i>	6 miles (north)
<i>Turning Stone Resort</i>	10 miles (southwest)
<i>Erie Canal Locks</i>	E22 and E21 – within 10 miles (west)
<i>Erie Canal Locks</i>	E20 and Utica Harbor Lock – within 15 miles (southeast)
<i>Shako:wi Cultural Center</i>	15 miles (southwest)
<i>Oneida County Historical Society</i>	17 miles (southeast)
<i>Steuben Memorial State Historic Site</i>	20 miles (northeast)
<i>Adirondack Park</i>	min. 20 miles (northeast)

*Rome Historical Society Museum* – The Rome Historical Society’s mission is to preserve the history of Rome, its people, and the surrounding community of Oneida County via permanent and temporary exhibitions and an established archive. The museum’s multimedia presentation of “Our Goodly Heritage” guides visitors through the early ice age to present day Rome. Permanent exhibits feature the Iroquois peoples, the Forts on the Carry, the canals, the dairy industry, manufacturing, and early life in Rome. Additional exhibits focus on significant 20th century developments, such as the Rome Turney Radiator Company and Griffiss Air Force Base. The museum has over 14,000 paper objects, most of which are available for public viewing, including photographs, local newspapers, and books.

*Rome Art and Community Center* – Rome Art and Community Center is a multi-arts facility committed to fostering creativity, cultural awareness, and a strong community connection through a broad range of programming and services. The city purchased the former Tudor-style mansion in 1967 to house the nonprofit Rome Art and Community Center. The center hosts various performances, film presentations, and concerts and artists have their work displayed in the galleries. The center offers creative arts classes and workshops for children and adults.

*Erie Canal Recreationway Trail* – The New York State Canal Recreationway Commission\* is planning an end-to-end towpath-based trail for bicycling, walking, and other recreational activities. To date, the Commission has overseen the completion of 230 miles of completed Canalway Trail. This trail parallels the Erie Canal and other canals in several stretches statewide.

*Bellamy Harbor Park* – Bellamy Harbor Park is a park that is unique for being situated on the Erie Canal. The site is a large open space with views of the canal and fishing and boating access. A pedestrian bridge now spans the Mohawk River and links Bellamy Harbor Park to Fort Stanwix via a path that commemorates the portage – “The Great Carry” – from the Mohawk River to Wood Creek. This 500-foot path parallels Route 49 and then joins Whitesboro Street. Lights go on at dusk in the area and over the bridge, which allows for 24-hour use. According to the city’s Urban Design Plan, the park is an underutilized asset but existing docking at Bellamy Harbor Park is well used.

*Erie Canal Village* – Erie Canal Village is an outdoor living history museum that draws visitors and families from across the region. It is a reconstructed 19th century settlement on the site where the first shovelful of earth was turned for the construction of the original Erie Canal. In addition to several 19th century buildings, the village features a mule drawn packet boat, an operational narrow gauge steam train, and three museums: the Erie Canal Museum, which presents the story of the Erie Canal; the Harden museum, which exhibits a collection of horse drawn vehicles; and the New York State Museum of Cheese building, which explores the history of cheese making in the region.

*Fort Rickey Children’s Discovery Zoo* – Fort Rickey has animals from around the world and is a combination zoo and family fun park. Fort Rickey’s mission statement is: “The owners and staff at Fort Rickey are committed to the belief that children, who have experienced the joy of kind and gentle interaction with wild animals, are more likely to become adults who care about protecting wildlife.” It is a “hands on” zoo where children are encouraged “to actively investigate and manipulate and discover.” Fort Rickey offers two experiences: wild animals and wild play, and both offer opportunities for exploration and interaction.

*Oriskany Battlefield State Historic Site* – Considered a significant turning point in the War of Independence, the Battle of Oriskany has been described as one of the bloodiest battles of the war. An 85-foot high monument was dedicated in 1884 to serve as a memorial and Oriskany Battlefield was designated a New York State historic site in 1927. In recognition of the site’s exceptional historic value, the battlefield was designated a National Historic Landmark in 1963. Today, visitors to the battlefield can walk the site, read a series of interpretive signs, and visit a historic encampment during special events. Also on the grounds are several small monuments and markers. In 2002, a shuttle temporarily ran between Fort Stanwix and Oriskany Battlefield for the sites’ 225-year anniversary.

*Lake Delta State Park* – Delta Lake State Park, which juts out into the waters of the Delta Reservoir, can be a quick weekday get-away or a more extended haven for camping or swimming. The land is wooded yet flat, offering a very pleasant location for picnickers, boaters, anglers, campers and those who enjoy winter sports. The 400-acre park opened in 1968 and has 101 campsites, three of which are handicapped accessible; 19 are on the waterfront. The lake has two boat launches, one within the park and the other located across the lake. Recreation opportunities include fishing, picnicking, camping, recreation

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\* The New York State Canal Recreationway Commission is a state-sponsored effort to preserve and rehabilitate the Canal infrastructure so that it is safe, accessible, and available for future use; to enhance recreational opportunities as commercial activity has almost disappeared; and to promote and foster economic development throughout the Canal Corridor along the existing New York State Canal System (active Erie, Champlain, Oswego, and Cayuga and Seneca Canals).

programs, hiking, power boating, playground, a nature trail, mountain biking, and swimming; in winter, cross-country skiing, snowmobiling and ice fishing are offered.

*Turning Stone Resort* – The Oneida Indian Nation operates the Turning Stone Resort, which is approximately ten miles from Fort Stanwix. The resort employs over 3,500 people, making it the largest employer in Oneida and Madison Counties. It is the fifth-largest tourist attraction in New York State and draws 4.5 million visitors annually, primarily from the United States and Canada. Turning Stone offers high-stakes bingo, live poker, 103 table games, keno, and pull tabs. The full service resort offers many other amenities such as three 18-hole and two 9-hole golf courses and a training center, several restaurants, a spa, luxury lodging, camping, entertainment, sporting events, and concert venues. The resort also has nearly 100,000 square feet of meeting space with flexible room configurations. Fort Stanwix has experienced some visitation from people who come to the region to go to Turning Stone.

*The Erie Canal and Erie Canal Locks* – The Erie Canal Corridor covers 524 miles of navigable water from Lake Champlain to the Capital Region and west to Lake Erie. The area has a population of 2.7 million, and it has been estimated that about 75% of upstate New York's population lives within 25 miles of the Erie Canal. Since the 1990s, use of the canal system has been primarily by recreational traffic, although a very limited amount of commercial traffic still uses the system. The Erie Canal is open to small craft and some larger vessels for most of the year; the annual boating season runs from May through November. In 2006, recreational boating usage fees were eliminated in hopes of attracting more visitors to the canal system. The New York State Canal Recreationway Commission is developing a plan to promote increased canal pleasure boating. Four locks along the present day Erie Canal are within a 10-mile radius of the City of Rome (Locks E22, E21, E20, and Utica Harbor Lock). Each lock has its own character and all are well maintained by the New York State Canal Corporation.

*Shako:wi Cultural Center* – The Shako:wi Cultural Center is housed in a handcrafted, white pine log building and is filled with crafts, art, and stories from the past and present of the Oneida People. Shako:wi is a focal point for the culture and history of the Oneida People. A continuing theme of the cultural center is the role the Oneida Nation played as the first allies of the colonists during the American Revolutionary War. The cultural center is more than a static display of things created in the past; the Oneida People use Shako:wi for gatherings and presentations about their Nation and their traditions.

*Oneida County Historical Society* – The Oneida County Historical Society was founded in 1876 and has served since that time to collect, preserve and make accessible the past heritage of Oneida County and the upper Mohawk River Valley. Services center around a research library, a 5000-square-foot museum exhibit area running two exhibits concurrently, weekly programs featuring guest artists, authors, and historians, and a bookstore offering over 600 titles.

*Steuben Memorial State Historic Site* – The Steuben Memorial honors Baron von Steuben, whose valuable wartime services have been described as being second in importance only to those of George Washington. In 1777, Steuben volunteered his services to Benjamin Franklin to advise the ill-trained American army. At Valley Forge, he converted the ragged, starving army into an effective fighting force. His program greatly increased the morale and strengthened the army. He authored the “Blue Book,” which still remains a basic reference for military training and organization. After the war, Congress granted von Steuben a life annuity and New York State deeded him a large parcel of land in appreciation for his wartime contributions. He summered on his land in a two-room log house until his death in November 1794. Although in his will he requested an unmarked grave, in 1804, his remains were transferred to what is now known as the “Sacred Grove.” Today a plain, but large monument marks Baron von Steuben's final resting place.

*Adirondack Park* – Route 365 provides direct access from the Thruway through Rome to the Adirondacks. The 6 million-acre Adirondack Park, which is the size of Vermont, contains the highest peaks in New York and has more shoreline than Vermont and New Hampshire combined. Within the region there are expansive blocks of backcountry interspersed with private homes, villages and tracts of corporate forest lands under active management. The park has more than 40 state-operated campgrounds, 2,000 miles of hiking trails, hundreds of miles of canoe routes, over 3,000 lakes, 30,000 miles of rivers and streams, and

42 peaks over 4,000 feet in height. Summer activities including hiking, canoeing, boating, fishing, swimming, biking, horse riding, camping, and hunting. Other activities include touring Olympic sites, visiting museums, and shopping. During the winter, visitors can partake of Alpine and Nordic skiing, snowmobiling, skating, and dog sledding. The Adirondacks are home to black bears, white tailed deer, common loons, mergansers, bald eagles, beavers, coyotes, fishers, bobcats, brook and lake trout, land-locked salmon and more.

### **Future Conditions**

*Erie Canalway Trail* – When completed, the continuous trail will be 524 miles long and will be the longest in the country, which should make it a notable eco-tourism destination. This trail is discussed in more detail in Section 10.

*Mohawk River Trail* – When completed, the Mohawk River Trail will stretch 5.5 miles from Bellamy Harbor Park to Delta Lake State Park north of the city and will closely follow the Mohawk River. This trail is discussed in more detail in Section 10.

*Rome Community and Recreation Center* – The Rome Community and Recreation Center is planned for an old General Cable Corporation industrial site close to the Erie Canal on the corner of Mill Street and Harbor Way. In addition to improving the quality of life for the Rome community, Mayor Jim Brown expects that the \$6.5 million Rome Community and Recreational Center project will be a “catalyst for non-traditional economic development.” The city is in the process of raising funds for the construction of the center. The original target opening date for the sports complex was Aug. 6, 2007, though Brown subsequently announced that the date must be pushed back. The first building to be constructed on the site would contain an indoor ice surface. Additional buildings, featuring indoor playing fields and meeting rooms, would be phased in. More information on the project can be found on the City of Rome’s website at: <http://romenewyork.com/organization.asp?orgid=103>

*Bellamy Harbor Park* – The city’s Urban Design Plan calls for the addition of an amphitheater, picnic pavilion, permanent restrooms, and expanded public docking (Figure 5). The design of the amphitheater would appeal to park users for informal use as well as providing a stage for local events. The plaza could have interpretive elements embedded in the pavement such as a map of the Great Carry Route and the history of the canal in Rome. A picnic pavilion is proposed to be located at the topographic high point on the west end of the park. The pavilion could be reserved for family reunions and other local functions. A serpentine handicapped accessible walkway is proposed to connect the amphitheater, waterfront promenade, and the pavilion and would be part of the Great Carry Trail. This section of the Great Carry Trail could include an interpretive garden of plantings used by Native Americans. Permanent public restrooms need to be developed to support the above facilities and intended programming.

**Figure 5**  
**Proposed changes to Bellamy Harbor Park**

Source: City of Rome Urban Design Plan



### Considerations and Recommendations

The park should conduct a study of transportation alternatives to more effectively link the park to neighboring attractions. These links could be alternative transportation links, roadways, scenic byways, trails, or a combination of the above. The draft General Management Plan for the park proposes an alternative that will significantly broaden the context of interpretation and collaborative heritage development and preservation initiatives involving local and regional partners. In this alternative, Fort Stanwix would take advantage of existing authorities to increase its capacity to support community outreach and other partnership initiatives. A study of transportation links would support this management alternative.

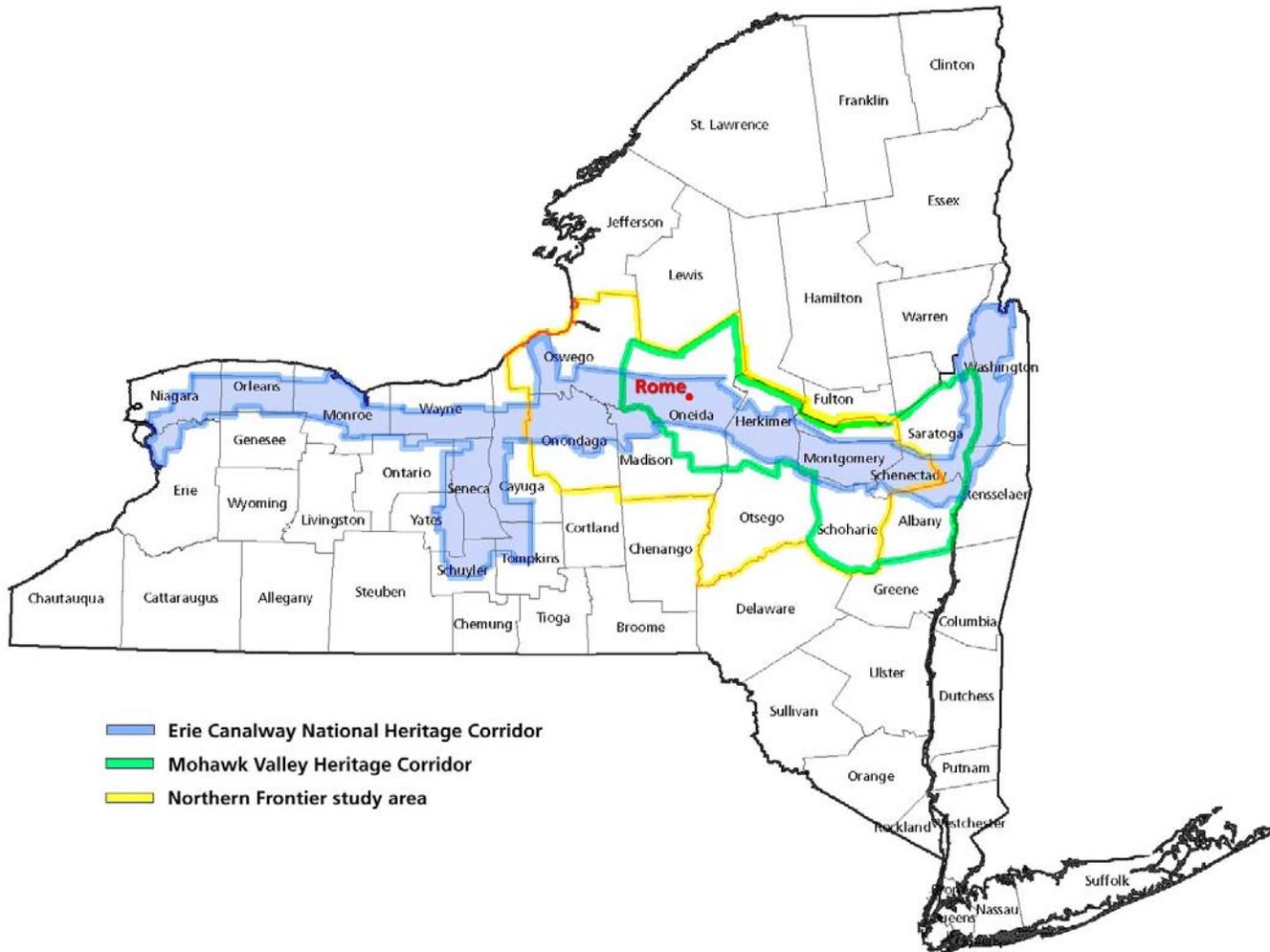
For example, a shuttle link between key attractions, such as Oriskany Battlefield State Historic Site, Turning Stone Resort, and Erie Canal Village, set up in cooperation with the City of Rome and other partners, could be an excellent pilot for a partnership in alternative transportation. An investigation into the potential for this partnership should be explored. Similarly, in conjunction with partners, a trail could connect the park with the canal and other trail systems.

## Section 3: Heritage Corridors and Scenic Byways

*Fort Stanwix is located at a confluence of Heritage Corridors (Figure 6) and Scenic Byways (Figure 7). The park can capitalize on its location by being involved in the evolution of these Corridors and Byways.*

**Figure 6**  
**Rome at the confluence of the Erie Canalway National Heritage Corridor, Mohawk Valley Heritage Corridor, and the Northern Frontier study area**

Source: Volpe Center, 2006



Mohawk Valley Heritage Corridor shape file provided by Mohawk Valley Heritage Corridor Commission

### Current Conditions

*Erie Canal National Heritage Corridor* – The Erie Canalway National Heritage Corridor covers 524 miles of canal in upstate New York, which includes the Erie, Champlain, Oswego, and Cayuga-Seneca canals; sections of the first Erie Canal; and over 200 municipalities adjacent to the canals (including the City of Rome). The Corridor encompasses 4,834 square miles in 23 counties with a population of 2.7 million people. The Erie Canalway National Heritage Corridor is one of about two dozen federally designated national heritage areas or corridors in the nation. The purpose of designating the Erie Canalway as a national heritage corridor is to provide for and assist in the preservation and interpretation of the

historical, natural, scenic and recreational resources in ways that reflect its national significance, and to help foster community revitalization.

When the Erie Canal received official designation as a National Heritage Corridor in December 2000, the canal became eligible for National Park Service funding for various canal related capital projects that can help promote tourism. Upon receiving this designation, the Erie Canal National Heritage Corridor Commission was formed to work with federal, state, and local authorities in creating and implementing a plan for the corridor that fosters the integration of canal-related historical, cultural, recreational, scenic, economic and community development initiatives. The commission will be in place until 2012. NPS provides a full-time executive director and professional staff to assist with planning, marketing, implementing the Commission's goals of preserving the Erie Canalway Corridor's resources, and enhancing educational and recreational opportunities in the corridor's communities.

According to the Highlights of the Draft Preservation and Management Plan (June 2005), the Corridor's outreach and educational efforts, technical assistance, and targeted investments seek to advance the New York State Canal Recreationway Plan's recommendations for increasing recreational and tour boating opportunities, developing side trails off the end-to-end Canalway Trail, and encouraging open space conservation and the creation of a continuous greenway along the canal system. Additionally, one of the Corridor's five strategies for implementation is to leverage canal revitalization program investments to build on the economic opportunities associated with enhanced Corridor recreation facilities. Enhanced special events, marketing, and new trails and signage connecting recreational facilities to each other and to downtowns and waterfronts will integrate the Corridor's extensive recreational resources into the bigger picture of heritage tourism and leisure activity.

*Mohawk Valley Heritage Corridor Commission* – The Mohawk Valley Heritage Corridor Commission (MVHCC) is a public benefit non-profit corporation created to improve historic preservation, recreation, education, and the economic future of the eight-county Mohawk Valley region. The corridor stretches 130 miles from the Hudson River to Oneida Lake, and is up to 70 miles wide. There are 203 communities, with approximately 1.1 million residents. The MVHCC promotes regional cooperation and fosters public and private partnerships among civic groups, government, and business leaders. It advances community development, historic preservation, interpretive literature and signage, scenic byways, and region-wide events. To attract new investment, all programs focus on the combination of community development and tourism, drawing on the heritage of the region, especially its early history and the physical legacy of the Erie Canal-Mohawk River waterway.

In 1997, the Mohawk Valley Heritage Corridor Commission designated Rome as one of four primary heritage hubs in the Mohawk Valley for development. The commission recognized that by developing the tourism value at Rome, the value of the entire Mohawk Valley would be increased.

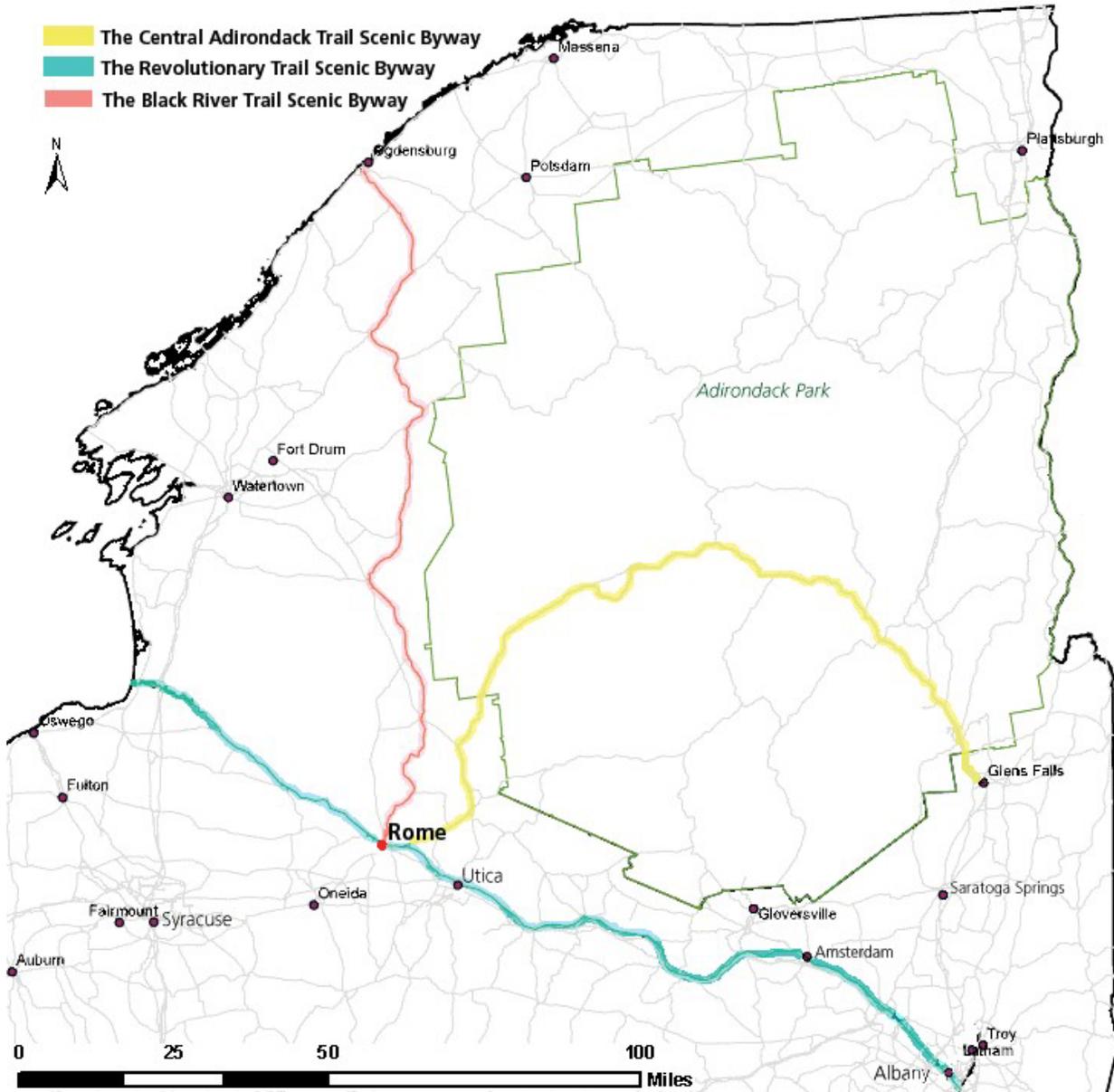
The MVHCC has completed an interpretive facility development plan for the corridor that includes specific recommendations for a western gateway center into the Mohawk Valley. Rome is envisioned as one of four facility development sites for the corridor. The MVHCC in its report acknowledges that the interpretation of Oriskany Battlefield and its relationship to Fort Stanwix is an important part of the overall education outreach within the valley, and that a western gateway center will be a key component in linking the myriad of significant sites. A major part of the plan called for the development of physical linkages such as trails, designated scenic routes, canal-side docking points, and signage to make the region fit together as a more seamless set of visitor experiences. Among the needs identified in the MVHCC's master plan are the need to create a clear image and identity for the Mohawk Valley; to interpret the history of the region according to the three major themes of the Iroquois Confederacy, the Revolutionary War, and the Erie Canal; to create a broader sense of regional identity; and to improve the tourism product and the visitor's experience.

*The Northern Frontier Special Resource Study (2002)* – Another regional initiative related to Fort Stanwix is the Special Resource Study of the Northern Frontier. The study assessed the options for a formal designation of the Northern Frontier area. The area encompasses part or all of ten counties between

Schenectady and Oswego and overlaps with both the Erie Canal National Heritage Corridor and the Mohawk Valley Heritage Corridor Commission. No formal designation has occurred to date.

**Figure 7**  
**Rome at the confluence of the Revolutionary Trail, the Central Adirondack Trail, and the Black River Trail**

Source: Volpe Center, 2006

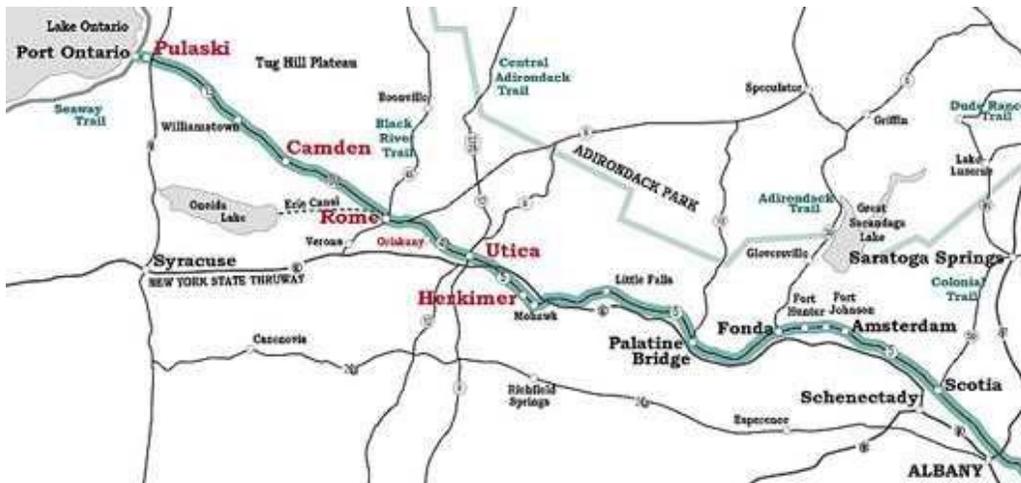


*The Revolutionary Trail Byway* – The Revolutionary Byway begins in Port Ontario on Lake Ontario and travels east through Camden, Rome on Routes 69 then 49, Utica, Fonda, and Albany (Figure 8). The byway connects on the east near Schenectady with the Mohawk Towpath, which, like the Revolutionary Trail Byway, is overseen by MVHCC. Early in the history of the colony, the Mohawk River was a critical east-west artery for trade, exploration, settlement, and troop movement. The 158-mile Revolutionary Trail Byway largely follows that artery. As it traverses valleys and woodlands, the route offers access to museums, historic sites, hiking, picnicking, water sports, and cycling. In 2004, the MVHCC and the

Herkimer County Area Development Corporation partnered to promote the Revolutionary Byway and to develop a corridor management plan.

**Figure 8**  
**The Revolutionary Trail Byway**

Source: New York State Scenic Byways Program



*Central Adirondack Trail* – The Central Adirondack Trail, also overseen by the ANCA, connects Glens Falls and Rome (Figure 9). This 140-mile scenic byway starts out of Rome on Route 365. In addition to the scenery, the Central Adirondack Trail offers access to a variety of outdoor activities such as camping, skiing, picnicking, and canoeing. Regional museums and historic sites are located along the path, and visitors can combine a drive through the Adirondacks with a lake cruise or scenic train ride. Over the summer of 2004, the ANCA met with towns and villages along the Central Adirondack Trail Scenic Byway to create a Corridor Management/Marketing Plan. The plan, completed in the winter of 2005, addresses the future of the travel route from Rome to Glens Falls.

**Figure 9**  
**The Central Adirondack Trail**

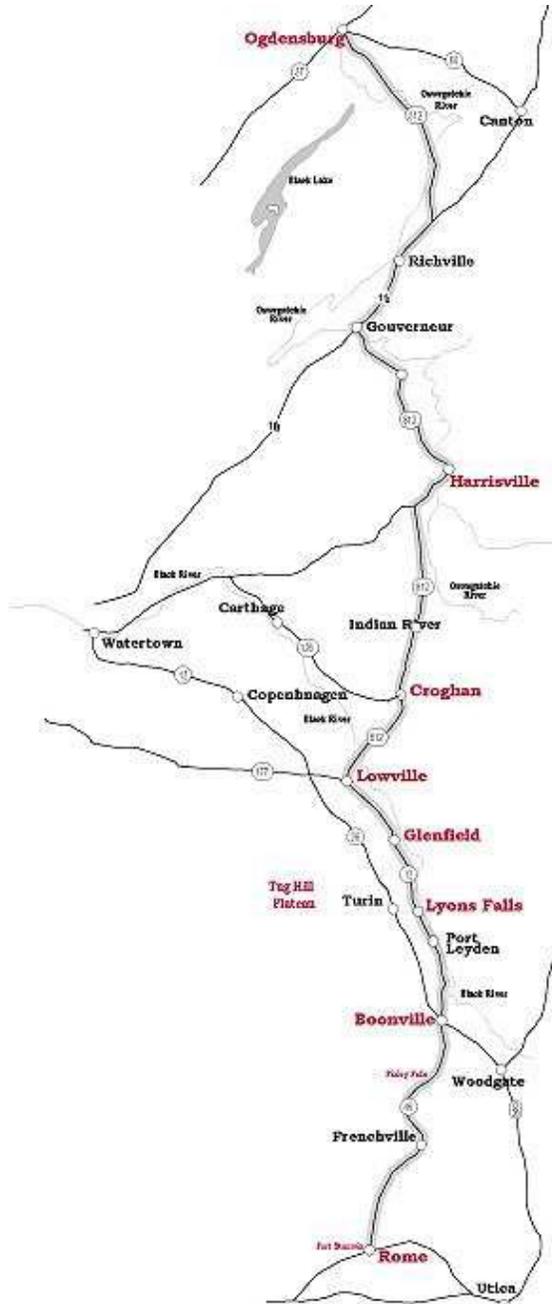
Source: New York State Scenic Byways Program



*The Black River Trail* – The Black River Trail, which is a scenic byway overseen by the Adirondack North Country Association (ANCA), starts in Rome on Route 46 and runs along the western edge of the Adirondacks. The 111-mile trail connects Rome to Ogdensburg, traveling through Lyon Falls, Lowville, Croghan, Harrisville, Gouverneur, Richville, and Canton. Along the byway are farmlands, gorges, the Black River Valley, and the Tug Hill Plateau, which receives the most annual snowfall east of the Rocky Mountains. In addition to the Black River, the Oswegatchie and Beaver Rivers also cross the byway. The rivers offer whitewater rafting, flat water paddlers, and fishing.

**Figure 10**  
**The Black River Trail**

Source: New York State Scenic Byways Program



## **Future Conditions**

*The Black River Trail* – In the spring of 2006, the Adirondack North Country Association (ANCA) began its fifth Upstate New York Scenic Byway Corridor Management Plan focusing on the Black River Trail Scenic Byway project. The Black River Trail Scenic Byway Corridor Management Plan Project will be developed as a companion project to the Black River Blueway Trail Project, which will link communities to the river itself. This approach highlights recreation and the environment to create a regional destination. The ANCA is a not-for-profit private corporation whose goal is to strengthen the economy and quality of life in the 14 counties of Northern New York.

## **Considerations and Recommendations**

The park can capitalize on being located at the confluence of these Heritage Corridors and Scenic Byways by being involved in their evolution. The Heritage Corridors and Scenic Byways have lead organizations that coordinate with regional stakeholders and oversee the development and growth of the corridors. The park should work with these organizations by attending meetings and providing any requested materials to ensure that Fort Stanwix is prominently mentioned and considered in all of the Heritage Corridor and Scenic Byway plans. The park should also work with the lead organizations to jointly market one another's attractions and to improve signage in the region to efficiently direct visitors to their intended destinations.

## Section 4: Signage

*Signage in the area can be significantly improved to efficiently guide visitors to their intended destinations.*

### Current Conditions

*Signage to and around Fort Stanwix* – Several sources recommend that directional and informational signage to Fort Stanwix should be more clear and prevalent. Signage, wayfinding, and traveler information can all be improved.

Signage from the Thruway – There are no official NPS signs along the New York State Thruway (Interstate 90) that direct visitors to Fort Stanwix. While Fort Stanwix is part of the New York State Thruway Logo Program and therefore has a small logo on the large attraction signs at Exits 32 and 33, the park is not allowed to install the official National Park Service (brown and white) signs on the Interstate 90 right-of-way. Fort Stanwix has repeatedly asked the Thruway Authority to allow the installation of these signs along the Thruway, but these requests have not been approved. The traffic and circulation report (1999) evaluated the following exit areas along the Thruway and their signage, or lack thereof, to Fort Stanwix:

- **Exit 31** (Utica) for Routes 8 and 12 provides an alternate northwest route to Rome via Route 49, Riverside Drive that turns into a divided highway at Carey’s Corner. No attraction signs are located at the exit or on Route 49 until the 49/69 merge with Route 26. If visitors get directions from the Internet and are instructed to travel west on the Thruway to get to the fort, they will also be instructed to take Exit 31 in Utica.
- **Exit 32** (Westmoreland-Rome) to Route 233 provides the most direct route into Rome. The exit is signed in the eastbound and westbound direction before the interchange. A large blue sign indicates the tourist attractions accessible from Exit 32. A small blue placard, approximately 3 feet by 2 feet with white letters states “Fort Stanwix Nat’l Monument” with the National Park Service logo (Figure 11). The letters are narrow and closely spaced. The signs are difficult to read when traveling at 65 mph.
- **Exit 33** (Verona-Rome) provides an alternate northeast route to Rome via Route 365 to Route 26 north to the Route 26/49/69 merge. This exit is also signed in the eastbound and westbound directions as described above.

**Figure 11**

**Fort Stanwix placard as part of Thruway attraction signs**

Source: Volpe Center, 2006



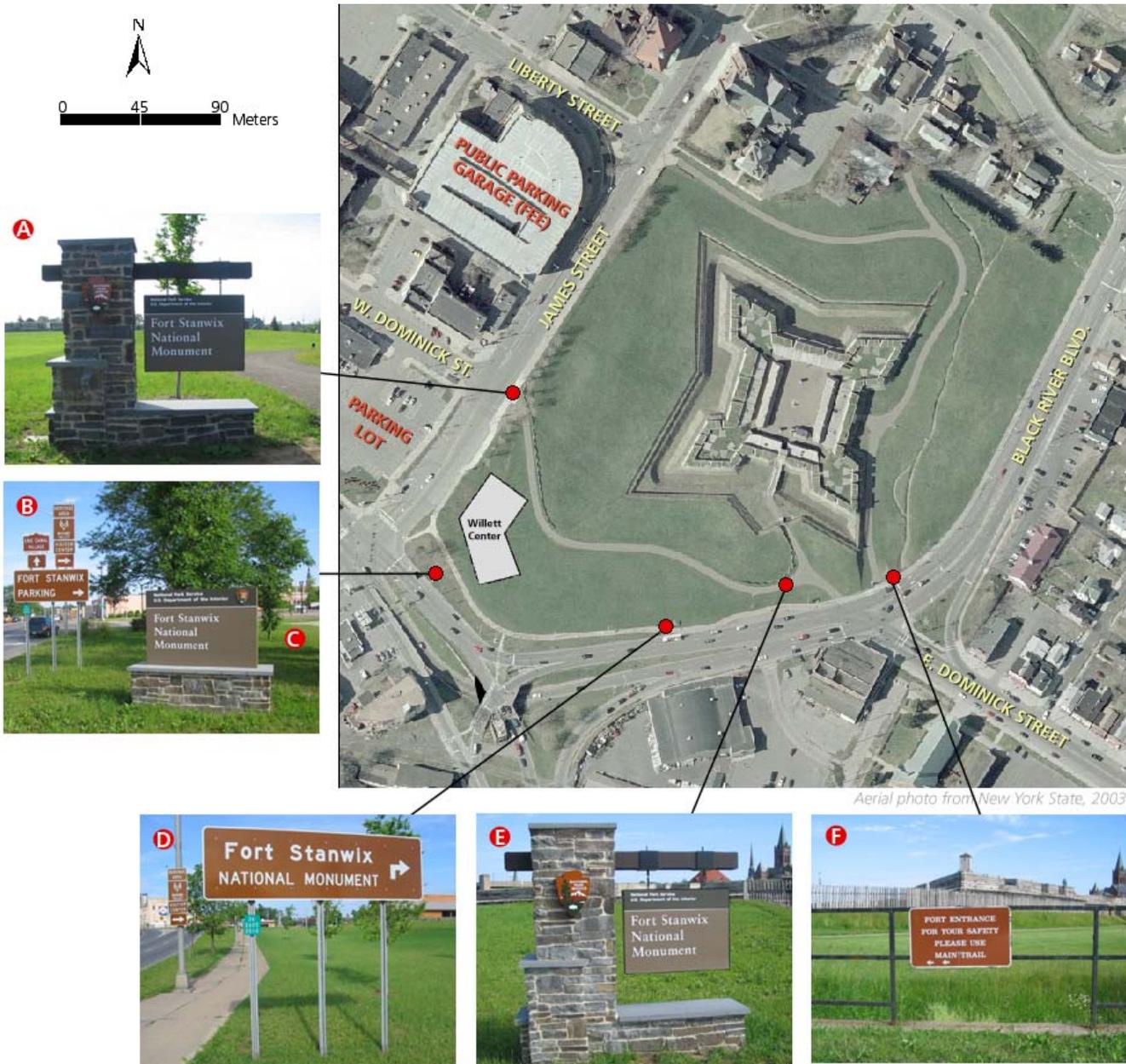
Signage along State Routes – State routes from Interstate 90 have minimal or no wayfinding signs. Due to the difficulty of getting signs installed along the state routes by the NYSDOT, one of the only signs is on 365 because it is on the Oneida Nation’s land.

Signage in Rome – Once in Rome, a circuitous pattern of streets combined with a lack of sufficiently clear signage makes it difficult for visitors to find the monument, know where to park, and find the entrance to the fort. Signage surrounding the park (Figure 12) includes:

- A. A new ‘glacial’-type entrance sign on the east side of North James Street faces visitors arriving from West Dominick Street.
- B. A large brown sign with multiple placards instructs motorists to turn right onto North James Street as they travel northwest on Erie Boulevard.
- C. A second new glacial on the north side of Erie Boulevard faces visitors arriving on Erie Boulevard.

**Figure 12**  
**Fort Stanwix Signage Locations**

Source: Volpe Center



- D. Another large brown sign on the north side of Black River Boulevard instructs motorists to take a right on Erie Boulevard as they travel west on Black River Boulevard.
- E. A third glacial faces visitors as they travel along Black River Boulevard.
- F. A small brown sign notes, “Fort Entrance, for your safety, please use main trail” with arrows pointing to the left. This sign can only be seen by pedestrians as they walk on the northwest side of Black River Boulevard.

Signage to and in the Garage – Currently, there is no signage that guides or shows visitors that they can park for Fort Stanwix in the parking garage as they travel on North James Street. Additionally, there is no signage in the parking garage that directs visitors to the park.

As late as 1999, there were signs directing visitors to park in the parking garage. As visitors drove north on North James Street, a bright orange sign on the east side of North James Street at the T-intersection with West Dominick Street stated, “Ft. Stanwix Parking, Use Garage” with two arrows pointing straight ahead. Another orange sign located directly across from the garage entrance had visitors turn left into the parking garage. The highly visible signs were mounted about 10 feet high on light poles. These signs were removed during an updating of the streetscape and were not replaced.

Signage from the Garage – When visitors exit the parking garage onto the sidewalk, no directive signs to the fort are in plain sight. If a decision is made to cross James Street at the garage entry, a median presents a safe area to decide whether to walk north toward the church path or south toward a sign. The directive sign, which is not legible from the median, is positioned half the distance to the main entry path across from East Dominick Street.

Signage for pedestrians – The Black River Road Boulevard pull-off and the crosswalk destination from East Dominick Street are adequately signed. The main gate is highly visible from two points. Interpretive signs on the path give historical references but no directional guidance to the fort main gate.

*City signage* – Generally, people coming into Rome and people in Rome feel that there is too much signage in certain areas of the city and that the signage is inconsistent. Visitors get lost or confused as they come into town from the arterials, and this is detrimental to their experience in Rome. Also, as articulated in the City of Rome Wayfinding Plan (2006), there is little or no signage that is specific to the visitor who has parked his or her car and is proceeding on foot toward a particular destination.

The report cited “Spaghetti Junction” (the convergence of Black River Boulevard and Erie Boulevard) as specifically needing improvement. The intersection of South James and Erie Boulevard and the Black River Boulevard connection to East Dominick is highly confusing to the first-time visitor, especially those approaching the center of town from East Dominick. The solution to the problem has seemingly been to add more signage. In this particular stretch of roadway, there is a severe problem with too much information. Using the standard of words, numbers, symbols, and traffic devices to each comprise “one” element of communication, the eastern approach to the intersection of Black River Boulevard and Erie Boulevard employs 31 separate elements. By comparison, the rule of thumb on directional signage in a dense urban environment is to limit the message to four destinations (usually 10 to 14 elements). Key destinations and services (e.g., Fort Stanwix and parking) could be alluded to in considerable advance to the actual intersections so that they would not compound the communication overload of route markers and traffic controls.

*Signage from the canal* – A couple of signs with maps are currently posted at Bellamy Harbor Park that show visitors what amenities and attractions are nearby. While one sign looks permanent, the other sign appear to be only temporary. Fort Stanwix is shown as an attraction on the more permanent sign.

## Future Conditions

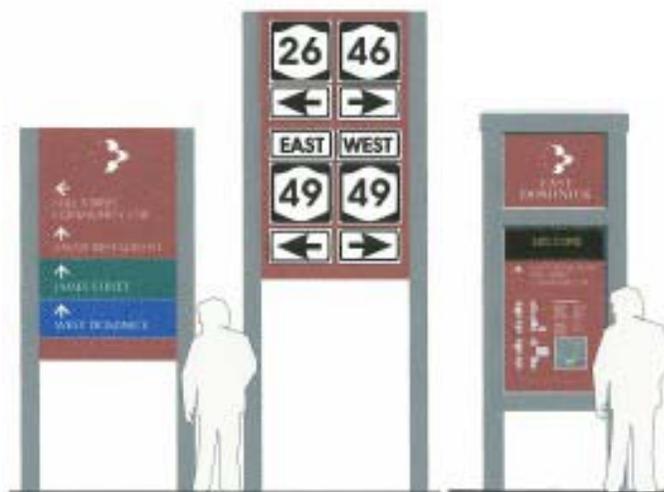
*City initiatives* – In May 2006, the city completed a Wayfinding Plan as it also completed its Urban Design Plan. The Wayfinding Plan discusses several issues and recommendations related to signage and wayfinding in and approaching the city. These key findings are summarized below:

- Three major streets should be emphasized as means to bring visitors to Fort Stanwix and downtown. The signage for each of the three corridors – East Dominick, West Dominick, and James Street – should have unique signage formats and color designations (Figure 13, left).
- Signage design should be coordinated around a strong identity for the City of Rome and for the approach corridor landscapes. The city should adopt a graphic identity/logotype that is simple yet distinct.

**Figure 13**

**A rough mock-up of directional signage for vehicles (left), route markers for vehicles (center), and orientation signage for pedestrians (right)**

Source: City of Rome Wayfinding Plan, 2006



- The city should develop a city-wide signage program that will direct visitors to the approach corridors from major access points to Rome.
- The city should develop a Master Plan of signage and wayfinding objectives, policies, and strategies.
- Rome's wayfinding strategies should be reinforced among all possible means of communication. Information should be consistently rendered in print, verbally, and in electronic and broadcast formats.
- Signage should be implemented that is aesthetically compatible with streetscape design elements.
- The municipal signage system should not only utilize uniform formats, but also common placement criteria, so that there is predictability as to where one should look for wayfinding assistance in the streetscape (Figure 13). A hierarchy should be developed that prioritizes what information is placed on directional signage and where this signage should be located. This should evolve into an overall wayfinding strategy that places a reasonable amount of directional signage in the streetscape where it can have the most benefit. Ideally, all such signs should be placed in the right-of-way and at a standard distance from an intersection or decision point.
- Pedestrian orientation signage is a key element in the project area because of its importance in acquainting visitors with the many points of interest they can access downtown as well as in the city as a whole. These kinds of signs usually include both a central-business-district map graphic as well as an

overall city/region map that can serve to identify even more places for visitors to access (Figure 13, right).

The city is also considering the creation of gateway markers and video signage for the downtown area. Gateway markers would give people a sense of where they are and that they arrived in a notable and significant place. The gateway markers would symbolize the sentiment “Welcome to Rome” and, to tie into Fort Stanwix’s signage, the markers could incorporate the stones that are in the Fort Stanwix glacials. The video signage would be similar to information kiosks where visitors could access maps, restaurant information, and information on special events. Video signage could and would need to be updated on a regular basis and would need to be monitored regularly to ensure that the system is working properly.

The implementation of the signage plan is expected to cost \$50,000. If the plan included the creation of the gateway markers and video signage, then implementation would cost approximately \$500,000. The implementation could be scaled back, perhaps to focus on one corridor first and to then phase in the rest. The city should be sure to estimate the cost of yearly maintenance of various signage system options.

*Signage in the garage* – At the joint City of Rome, Rome Main Streets, and Fort Stanwix meeting in January 2006, participants discussed the possibility of adding signs to the parking garage adjacent to the fort. The signage discussed at this meeting includes the following possibilities:

- One sign could be added to the outside of the garage that states, “Fort Stanwix Parking.” This sign could be in the NPS brown and white color scheme, and it could be double-sided and perpendicular to the face of the garage so that vehicles on James Street could see the sign in both directions.
- Small signs could be added throughout the garage and specifically in the stairwells and around the elevator to guide people from the garage to Fort Stanwix.
- The park has considered putting a “wayside” interpretive sign on the top (fourth) floor of the garage due to its view of the fort and the surrounding area. A coin-operated viewing machine could be a component of the wayside. Signs in the garage could guide visitors to this wayside.
- A few years ago, a design was created for banners to be installed on the sides of the garage to improve the garage’s appearance. These banners were of contrasting colors and, if re-designed, could incorporate today’s park colors. Rome Main Streets would like to implement this design.

The city offered that if the park could help with the cost of the signage, then parking on the fourth floor of the garage could be free for visitors, with validation provided at the Willett Center.

*Signage from the canal* – If implemented, a recommendation from *A Report on the Future of New York State Canals*, December 2005, calls for the improvement of informational and directional signage: “The Erie Canal Greenway should create a comprehensive program, in partnership with local government and businesses, to design and install informational signage at locks, ports, and harbors to improve boater awareness of nearby services, businesses and attractions... Informing Canal users about local amenities and attractions will not only draw additional visitors into the community, but will enhance the experience of boaters and landside users alike. This community-driven effort would supplement the broader regional effort by the Erie Canalway National Heritage Corridor to provide gateway and interpretive signage with Federal funding. A Canal Greenway grant program, requiring a local match, should be established to accomplish this. Any new signage program should be coordinated with existing programs, such as those being initiated by the ECNHC, scenic byways, State Heritage Areas and others, to ensure efficiency and minimize signage blight.”

## Recommendations

- On behalf of Fort Stanwix and all NPS units in New York, the NPS regional or headquarters offices should look into the issue of installing official NPS directional signs on Interstate right-of-way throughout New York State. The recommended outcome will be an agreement with the New York State Thruway Authority to allow official NPS signs within their right-of-way that direct visitors to the appropriate exits to NPS units.
- The park recently received funding for additional signage in the region. The park should examine the feasibility of using these funds for some of the signage ideas above.
- The park should communicate with the city as to where signs should go along routes leading into Rome. The mayor has strong relationships with state officials, so he can contact the regional New York State DOT representative and request where the signs should go up along which state roads.
- Park staff would be helpful in identifying locations where additional signs would be particularly useful.
- The park should work with the city to ensure that the city's signage includes design elements from the park's signage system.
- Fort Stanwix should work with partners and stakeholders to improve and expand directional and informational signage to the monument and the parking garage on James and Liberty Streets. At a minimum, the signs from circa 1999 should be replaced along the east side of North James Street.

## Section 5: Traffic and Circulation

*While not congested, the streets surrounding Fort Stanwix are difficult to navigate.*

### Current Conditions

*Approach to the park* – The visitor study from the summer of 2003 found that of the over 200 respondents to a questionnaire, 80% of visitor groups used one vehicle to enter, 10% did not arrive in a vehicle, and 8% used two vehicles. Most visitors to the fort arrive on the New York State Thruway by taking Exit 32, which, as described in the previous section, is signed in both directions. Visitors then follow State Route 233 to Erie Boulevard, taking a right after the fort onto James Street. However, if visitors get directions from the Internet and are to travel west on the Thruway to get to the fort, they will be instructed to take Exit 31 in Utica. Combined with a lack of signs around this exit, this route is confusing for first time visitors due to the high number and frequency of turns necessary to navigate out of Utica. Exit 33, which is signed in both directions from the Thruway to the fort, is relatively straightforward on State Route 365 to State Route 26.

*Streets around the park* – Public streets surround the fort property, except at the northwest corner where it is abutted by Saint Peter’s Church. The public streets include North James Street, a four-lane city street partially separated by a median; Black River Boulevard (State Route 26), a four-lane arterial state highway; Erie Boulevard (State Route 46/49/69), the four-lane major arterial state highway through the downtown area; and Park Street, a narrow city street that does not completely connect east to west across the park. Court Street, which is just north of Park Street, connects North James Street and Black River Boulevard. Due to the lack of adequate signage, it is not clear where visitors should park once they have reached the fort. While one sign on northbound Erie Boulevard directs visitors to turn right onto North James Street to park, no additional sign shows visitors that they can park in either the parking garage or in the bank’s parking lot. Visitors may have to circle around or double back to ultimately find an appropriate parking space.

*Intersections around the park* – There are traffic signals at the corner of North James and Erie Boulevard and at the corner of North James and Liberty Streets. There is a stop sign on West Dominick Street at its intersection with North James Street. North James Street has the right-of-way. There are turning lanes from Erie Boulevard onto North James Street and from North James Street onto West Dominick Street.

Spaghetti Junction – The convergence of Erie Boulevard and Black River Boulevard is known locally as “Spaghetti Junction.” At this convergence, the roughly east-running Black River Boulevard terminates/begins and Erie Boulevard runs roughly north-south. While the left turn from Black River Boulevard to Erie Boulevard south occurs at an at-grade intersection with traffic signals, the left turn from Erie Boulevard to Black River Boulevard east occurs through an underpass. Not only is this convergence confusing for drivers, it is also difficult for pedestrians and bicyclists to cross. According to the city’s Comprehensive Plan, initial discussions with NYSDOT officials indicate that this facility is nearing the end of its useful life. According to the city’s Urban Design Plan: “The intersection is a visual blight at the primary entry point to the City, and its confusing array of choices does not impart a welcoming sense of arrival. Further, the current configuration, including the underpass, provide virtually no accommodation for pedestrians to move through the intersection.”

*Traffic around the park* – Two of the arterials that border the fort are heavily traveled: Erie Boulevard and Black River Boulevard. Traffic counts in 1999 and 2000 conducted by the fort indicate an average annual daily traffic count (AADT) of about 21,500 on Erie Boulevard, 21,000 on Black River Boulevard, 8,500 on North James Street, and 3,850 on Court Street. Counts have generally been stable to slightly increasing over the past five years. The highest hourly volumes are during the morning and evening rush hours (8:00 am – 8:30 am and 4:30 pm – 5:00 pm), and during lunchtime.

*Significant highway and bridge projects* that have recently been completed in the region include the following two projects:

Utica-Rome Expressway (West) – This project was constructed to link Utica and Rome, provide the transportation network needed to support industry and commerce in the area, spur economic development, and relieve congestion on State Route 49 in the town of Marcy. The project consisted of several new bridges, the removal of the State Route 291 structure over State Route 49, lengthening a railroad bridge, extensive utility relocation work, new culverts, wetland mitigation, a pedestrian bridge and trail, and a new local road, all on a new alignment of fewer than four miles. While it used to take 20 minutes to travel from Utica to Rome, the travel time is now 12 minutes.

Griffiss Parkway – This project improved the roadway infrastructure through the Griffiss Business and Technology Park in the City of Rome. It connects State Route 49 to State Route 46 along a corridor from the Wright Drive entrance to Chestnut Street. The improvements included a four lane divided parkway from the Wright Drive entrance to Ellsworth Drive, transitioning to a four lane undivided surface arterial, including a roundabout, bicycle and pedestrian trail, highway lighting, and sidewalks. The second phase included replacing the bridge carrying Chestnut Street over the Mohawk River and reconstruction of Chestnut Street.

### **Future Conditions**

The Herkimer-Oneida Counties Transportation Study (HOCTS) is the region’s federally-designated metropolitan planning organization (MPO). MPOs prioritize federal funds for transportation projects within their regions. HOCTS selected the following proposed highway and bridge corridors in their long-range transportation plan as potential long-range transportation improvements using such criteria as safety, congestion, economic development or access needs, and maintaining the transportation system in good condition. As part of the long-range plan, these projects can be funded within the next 20 years.

- ROUTE 365 WEST (ONEIDA TO ROME) – Route 365: Oneida to Route 31, Route 365 and Route 31 Intersection, and Route 365: Route 31 to Griffiss Park
- ROUTE 46, 49, 69 (ROME WEST TO ROME EAST) – Route 46, 49, and 69 Intersection (Spaghetti Junction) and Rome Loop West: Route 69 to Route 49
- URBAN GATEWAYS – Rome - Fort Stanwix/Route 46 Intersection

*Redesign of Spaghetti Junction* – The city’s Comprehensive Plan proposes that the current system of overpasses and underpasses be reconstructed as an at-grade intersection (Figure 14). According to the plan, the current and projected traffic volumes for the facility do not require the capacity provided by a grade-separated intersection. Given this and the expense associated with maintaining the grade-separated facility, NYSDOT has indicated that it would consider reconstructing the facility at grade. Reconstruction of the intersection would provide an attractive gateway to Rome’s central business district, with improved visibility for Fort Stanwix, the Willett Center, and municipal structures. Street trees, a low-maintenance planted median and safer pedestrian crossings along this intersection would make the central business district more accessible and attractive. The reconstruction would also provide the opportunity to create a new development site that would enhance the connection of Fort Stanwix and the central business district to East Dominick Street and increase the city’s tax base with new private sector development.

The city’s Urban Design Plan reinforces the city’s Comprehensive Plan. As a part of the Urban Design Plan, an engineering company undertook an analysis of alternatives for this intersection. The objective was to identify an intersection concept that would be safe for pedestrians and vehicles, work well for traffic flow, and be an attractive entrance to the city. A roundabout at this location was analyzed but rejected because it could not adequately handle the traffic flows. A larger traffic circle with bypass lanes would be able to handle the flows but would result in a large vehicular dominated intersection without pedestrian accommodation. Accordingly, the engineers and city propose a traditional at-grade “T” intersection with at grade pedestrian crossings. This would simplify traffic flows, create a safe pedestrian environment, and provide an opportunity for integrating a landscape feature at this important arrival

point to the city. The complete analysis is included in Appendix B of the city's Urban Design Plan, and cost estimates for the reconstruction of the intersection are included in Appendix A.

**Figure 14**  
**Spaghetti Junction redesigned to be an at-grade intersection**

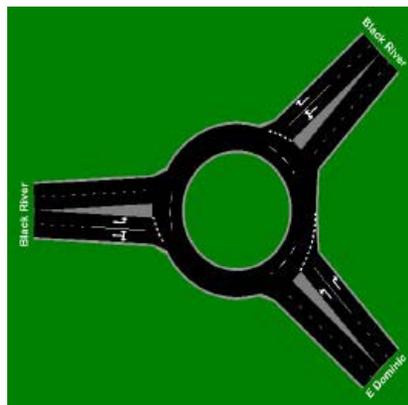
Source: City of Rome Comprehensive Plan



*Roundabout at East Dominick Street and Black River Boulevard* – The city's Urban Design Plan proposes a landscaped roundabout at the Black River Boulevard/East Dominick Street intersection (Figure 15). The city hired engineer consultants to evaluate the functionality of a roundabout in this location. The consultants found that it is feasible.

**Figure 15**  
**Possible roundabout design for the intersection of Black River Boulevard and East Dominick Street**

Source: City of Rome Roundabout Feasibility Memo



### **Considerations and Recommendations**

- The park should support and participate in planning with partners for any redesign of major traffic arteries and intersections into and around the downtown.
- The park should work with the city to be sure that, if funded, the roundabout at Black River Boulevard and East Dominick would have safe and commonsensical crosswalks for pedestrians on all three sides.
- In printed materials and when contacted for directions from out of town, park staff should recommend that visitors take Exit 32 off the Thruway if they are coming from points east and Exit 33 if they are coming from points west.
- Participate in finding long-term transportation solutions for intersections, arterials, state highways, and local streets into downtown Rome and surrounding the monument. TAG recommends that the City of Rome take the lead on local planning efforts and that the Herkimer-Oneida Counties Metropolitan Planning Organization lead regional planning efforts. Fort Stanwix and NPS should be a member of the planning team(s), but not the lead.

## Section 6: Parking

*Parking is abundant, but Fort Stanwix does not own any parking facilities. The park should coordinate with the city and surrounding businesses to ensure that parking will be available for future visitors to the fort.*

### Current Conditions

The National Park Service does not own or operate any parking facilities at Fort Stanwix. While parking is not permitted on city streets along the perimeter of the park, abundant parking is available in surface lots, the garage on James and Liberty, and at meters on surrounding streets. No formal agreements exist between the NPS and property owners for ongoing visitor use of the surface lots or the garage.

The main parking for the fort is located on the west side of North James Street. Public parking available within two blocks of the fort entrance on North James Street comprises a total of approximately 680 spaces:

- The North James Street lot – 88 spaces in a privately owned parking lot on the southwest corner of North James and West Dominick Streets, including three bus/recreational vehicle and four accessible spaces;
- The Liberty-James parking garage – 533 spaces in a parking garage on the southwest corner of North James and Liberty Streets;
- Metered parking – 32 metered street parking spaces on the 100 – 200 block of West Dominick; and
- The Rome Savings Bank lot – 27 metered spaces behind the Rome Savings Bank, on the north side of West Dominick Street, including two accessible spaces.

The Rome Parking Authority operates the metered parking and the two parking garages in the central business district (CBD). The Rome CBD Master Plan conducted limited occupancy surveys of parking facilities in the CBD in May 1995. Overall parking occupancy was found to be 40-50% during the weekdays. Occupancy at the Liberty-James Street garage averages 85%.

According to an estimate by the park, there are 13.5 cars parked over the course of an hour for a visit to the park during non-special event peak visitation. During non-special event average visitation, there are 8.3 cars parked over the course of an hour for a visit to the park. During the winter, there are 2.5 cars parked over the course of an hour for a visit to the park.

Large special events at the fort are usually held after business hours and on weekends. People are able to park at the locations listed above as well as in other parking lots, both public and private, that are considered to be outside of the typical visitor's walking range to the fort. These include Freedom Plaza south of Erie Boulevard, which contains approximately 886 striped parking spaces, the George Street parking garage, and the surface lots downtown.

*Visitor experience with parking* – Visitor experience with parking is ambivalent. According to the Fort Stanwix National Monument Visitor Study (2003), the element most often rated by visitors as “adding to” their visit was parking availability (22%). However, the element that most “detracted from” the visitor experience was also availability of parking (24%). 54% of visitor groups reported that parking availability had no effect on their visitor experience. More specifically, when asked what they least liked about their visit to Fort Stanwix, ten of 121 comments stated that “parking was too far away,” eight of 121 comments stated that there were “not enough parking spaces,” and six of 121 comments stated “having to cross a busy street from parking.” When asked what a manager planning for the future should plan for, seven of 145 comments said “better parking facility” and two of 145 comments said “better access for disabled persons.”

*Accessible parking* – There are four handicapped spaces at the North James Street lot and two accessible spaces at the Rome Savings Bank lot. The Liberty-James Street garage is partially accessible, with elevators and access ramps, but no automatic door openers to the glass enclosed elevator bank.

*Drop-off areas/bus pullouts* – In order to accommodate groups arriving by bus and visitors with disabilities, two areas along the sidewalk perimeter of the fort have been designed as drop off areas. Long-term parking is not allowed in the drop-off areas. The primary drop-off area is located on the east side of North James Street across from West Dominick Street. It is a short walk from this area to the front door of the Willett Center. The secondary drop off site is located on the north side of Black River Boulevard as it approaches Spaghetti Junction. It is a longer walk from this area to the front door of the Willett Center, and there is no signage present to guide visitors from the drop-off to the Willett Center. While both drop-off areas require navigating and egressing in areas of traffic close to signal lights, the traffic along Black River Boulevard is usually faster and more congested.

*Visitor parking lots* – According to park and city staff, most visitors to Fort Stanwix park in the North James Street parking lot, the Liberty-James parking garage, in front of the Rome Historical Society, and in other locations, usually on the west side of the fort. The parking situation for each of these areas is described below.

North James Street lot – the North James Street parking lot is located on North James Street between West Dominick Street and Erie Boulevard. Rome Savings Bank, which is located across West Dominick, owns this lot and there is a “handshake agreement” with Fort Stanwix to allow bus and visitor parking. Buses or recreational vehicles (usually just buses) park in the back of the lot. While tour buses sometimes park in the Freedom Mall parking lot, there is no designated bus parking area in Rome beside the three spaces at the North James Street lot. The park estimates that at the most, there may be 12 cars parked in the lot whose occupants are visiting the fort.

The arrangement with the bank may not exist in perpetuity. During the winter snows, the park is willing to plow the back of the bank’s lot in exchange for allowing visiting buses to park there, but it has not been necessary to extend this offer since this has yet to be an issue. However, the bank is considering having some or all of the parking in this lot metered due to a recent price increase at the parking garage, which is causing more cars to use the bank’s lot.

Liberty-James Parking Garage – The four-story Liberty James parking garage is open from 6:30 am until 7:00 pm, Monday through Friday. Parking in the garage costs \$10.00 a day (hourly rates are on a graduated scale). The garage, which reportedly never fills to capacity, is closed on weekends and major holidays. The garage is located approximately 700 feet north of the fort entrance, but crossing from the garage to the park can be dangerous. Oversize vehicles cannot fit into the garage. The fourth story of the garage provides a good aerial view of Fort Stanwix.

In front of the Rome Historical Society – Approximately 20 metered spots line the square on the southeast corner of North James Street and East Court Street next to Saint Peter’s Church and the Rome Historical Society. Visitors who park in this area cannot see the fort and may be confused about the best way to walk to the Willett Center. Park administrative offices are located above the Historical Society in the old post office.

Other areas to park – Other areas to park include street parking on North James Street, the Ace Hardware store’s lot on Black River Boulevard, and street parking on other streets around the park. Currently, parking is not allowed on the Fort Stanwix side of North James Street except for church patrons on Sundays. Nonetheless, some visitors park along North James Street. Some visitors approaching the fort on Black River Boulevard or who are confused by Spaghetti Junction may end up parking in Ace Hardware’s parking lot on Black River Boulevard. No agreement exists between the park and Ace Hardware for visitor use of their parking lot. A limited amount of on-street parking is available in front of businesses on East Dominick Street near Black River Boulevard, and metered parking is available along West Dominick Street and other streets farther from the fort. Meters are enforced Monday through Saturday, from 9:00 am until 6:00 pm. Parking at a meter for the maximum 2 hours permitted would cost \$1.00.

## **Future Conditions**

*General* – The City of Rome’s Comprehensive Plan calls for doing a market assessment examining the need for parking to support Fort Stanwix as a key task in developing the central business district’s revitalization plan.

*Liberty-James Parking Garage* – While the name of the Liberty-James Parking Garage has been changed to the “Fort Stanwix Parking Garage,” a sign for the front of the garage has not been made. The mayor is working on legislation that would allow the garage to be open on weekends, but the park may have to pay for these extended hours. The estimated cost of operating the garage on the weekend is \$300 on Saturday and \$350 on Sunday.

*Other* – As part of the improvements to North James Street, the city’s Urban Design Plan calls for implementing parallel parking on the east side of North James Street between West Dominick and Liberty Street.

## **Considerations and Recommendations**

- If the opportunity arises, the park should try to formalize its agreement with the Rome Savings Bank to continue to allow visitor parking, especially since this lot provides the nearest bus and accessible parking to the park.
- Once it has been decided how the sign for the recently designated Fort Stanwix Parking Garage will be funded, the park should be sure that the NPS colors of brown and white are used for the Fort Stanwix Parking Garage sign.
- If the park determines that they should pay to have the parking garage open on weekends, they should ask if visitors to the fort could then get a parking discount at all times. Also, the park should consider having the garage open on weekends only during peak hours during peak months.
- The park may want to negotiate with the city to have the fourth floor of the parking garage dedicated to park visitors, especially if a wayside (interpretive sign) is placed on the fourth floor to describe the view of the fort and surrounding areas.

## Section 7: Streetscape Improvements

*The City of Rome, in partnership with Rome Main Streets Alliance, recently completed an Urban Design Plan. This plan calls for a number of streetscape improvements in areas adjacent to park property.*

### Current Conditions

*Rome Main Streets Alliance* – Twelve communities received funding through New York’s Quality Communities Program in 2004. As one of those recipients, Rome used its funding to start a Main Streets program. Unlike in other states, there is no state coordinator for Main Streets in New York, so the program manager communicates directly with the main office in Washington, DC. The program will spend \$350,000 on façade improvements next year, at a 90% reimbursement rate.

*City of Rome’s Urban Design Plan* – According to the Urban Design Plan, revitalization efforts should be focused on the three corridors identified by Main Streets: 1) East Dominick to Nock Street, 2) West Dominick to Arsenal, and 3) North James Street. Each of the Main Streets Corridors should implement the following basic principles to:

- Construct new sidewalks with specialty paving accents. Clearly delineate pedestrian and vehicular zones to encourage pedestrian activity, calm traffic, improve aesthetics, and enhance safety.
- Install decorative lighting.
- Undertake a street tree planting program.
- Implement a maintenance plan.
- Consider relocating overhead wires to back alleys.
- Locate utilities and transformers to be as unobtrusive as possible. Where possible locate close to the ground. Landscape screening is appropriate, but covering utilities with murals draws more attention to them and should be avoided.

North James Street – Façade and landscape improvements implemented in the last year along North James Street create a visibly revitalized corridor. The sidewalk, lighting and landscape improvements at the FasTrac and Exxon stations provide a model of good site planning that can be utilized on other existing and new developments. Buildings that have been vacant for years have been rehabilitated and new business activity has created more pedestrian traffic, resulting in a more lively and safe downtown that benefits businesses and residents. The North James Street Corridor Demonstration Project illustrates the benefit of focusing improvements on specific corridor segments to achieve visible success, as opposed to spreading improvements across a larger area that dilutes the effect and seldom creates the same benefit.

West Dominick Street – The east end of the corridor between James Street and George Street was largely reconstructed as part of urban renewal and does not retain the historic character of the west end of the corridor. The concentration of government buildings serves as a visual barrier, making it difficult for visitors to see the business district beyond. Further west, between George and Madison, the street widens excessively, which diminishes its appeal as a pedestrian zone. The street character between Madison and Arsenal is poor. Undefined curb cuts with excessive pavement, lack of defined pedestrian walkway zones, lack of street trees, and poor building maintenance all contribute to a poor appearance, lack of cohesion, and a unfriendly environment for pedestrians. The Arsenal House, a historic structure dating to the War of 1812, anchors the western end of the corridor. There are plans for the rehabilitation of the Arsenal House, and opening of the building for historic interpretation is planned.

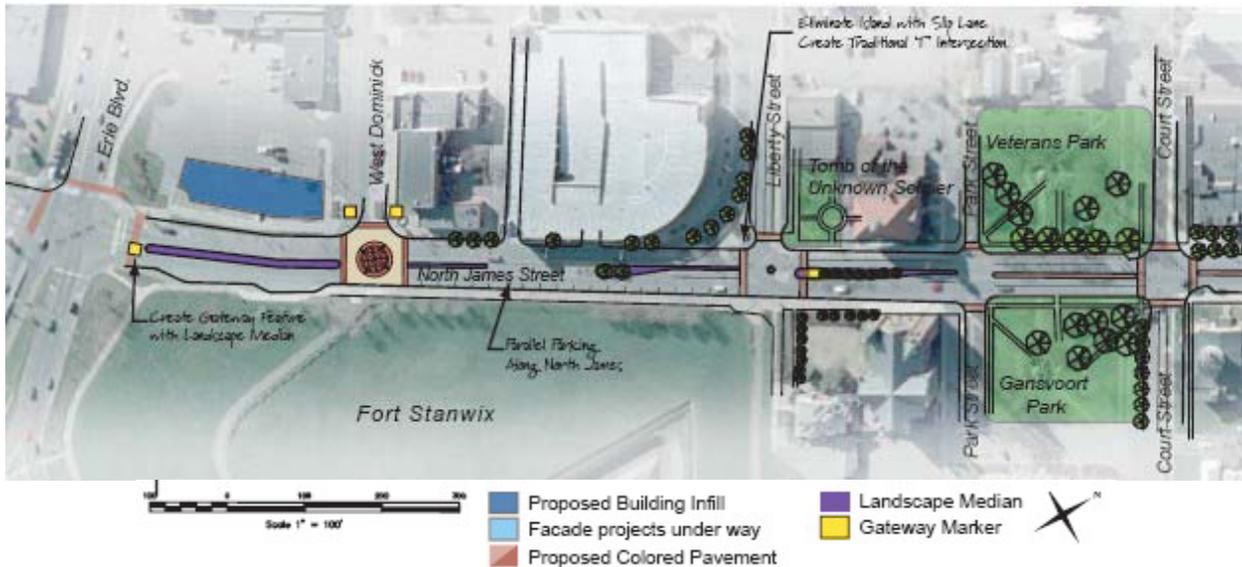
East Dominick Street – The East Dominick Main Streets Corridor extends from Black River Boulevard on the west to Nock Street on the east. The corridor is predominately commercial between Black River Boulevard and Sixth Street and transitions to residential scaled buildings between Sixth Street and Nock Street. East Dominick Street developed as an enclave of restaurants and bars to serve the workers of the copper mills located to the south. The copper mills are largely nonexistent today, but much of the restaurant/bar activity remains, as well as the historic buildings.

## Future Conditions

*North James Street* – The intersection of Erie Boulevard and North James Street marks the point that one has “arrived” in downtown Rome. This important intersection should be developed as a gateway to the City, the James Street corridor, and the new Willett Center. Pavement widths at the Erie Boulevard / James Street intersection and north on North James Street are excessive. A central landscaped median with gateway marker should be installed between Erie Boulevard and West Dominick streets to create a welcoming approach to the downtown and new Visitor Center that communicates a sense of arrival. Visitors to the Willett Center are directed to park in the Liberty-James parking garage, but walking from the garage to the Willett Center is unsafe and unclear. The North James/West Dominick intersection should be modified to create an appropriate entrance for the Visitor Center, slow traffic, and allow pedestrians to move safely from the City parking garage to the Visitor Center. A “compass-rose” paving design is proposed for the intersection, acknowledging and interpreting the historic location of the American Corner (see Figure 17).

**Figure 16**  
**Proposed improvements for North James Street civic and historic center**

Source: City of Rome Urban Design Plan



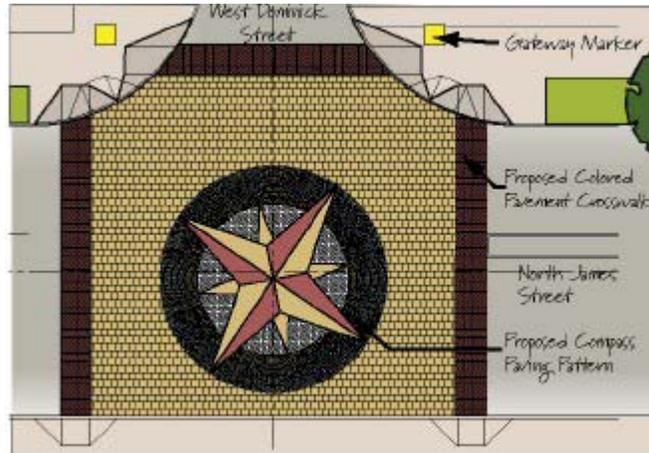
Proposed improvements for North James Street civic and historic center (Figure 16) include:

- Creating a gateway to the city by installing a landscaped median with gateway marker between Erie Boulevard and West Dominick Street;
- Creating a welcoming and appropriate approach to the Willett Center;
- Creating safety and aesthetic improvements at North James/Dominick Street intersection with a compass rose design to mark the American Corner (Figure 17);
- Implementing parallel parking on the east side of North James Street between West Dominick and Liberty Street;
- Cleaning the exterior of the Liberty-James Parking Garage and installing color tile insets on façade;
- Eliminating the island with a slip ramp and replacing it with a regular “T” intersection at the North James/Liberty Street intersection;
- Installing period lighting;
- Providing color pavement crosswalks at all intersections;
- Planting street trees; and

- Encouraging improvements to structures and construction of new structures consistent with downtown design guidelines.

**Figure 17**  
**American Corner specialty paving intersection**

Source: City of Rome Urban Design Plan



North of this area from Huntington to Bloomfield Streets along North James Street, the Urban Design Plan proposes installing gateway markers at the North James Street and Fort Stanwix Park Street intersection, installing center colored pavement median flush to asphalt, installing period lighting, constructing new sidewalks including brick or colored paver accents, providing color pavement crosswalks at all intersections, planting street trees, and encouraging improvements to structures and construction of new structures consistent with downtown design guidelines.

*West Dominick Street* – Proposed improvements for West Dominick Street include constructing new sidewalks, planting street trees, installing period lighting, creating a gateway at North James Street and George Street, installing central landscape median between George and Madison Streets, relocating murals to arts district, developing a marketing plan for arts corridor and the Rome Entertainment, Arts, Cultural and Historic (REACH) District, developing the Oliver Building as an incubator for artists, undertaking façade improvements consistent with the design guidelines, and encouraging improvements to structures and construction of new structures consistent with downtown design guidelines.

*East Dominick Street* – According to the city’s Urban Design Plan, East Dominick Street has the potential to emerge as an authentic Little Italy. Several successful Italian restaurants are located on the corridor, and the former Gualtieri Italian Grocery is being restored to its former use. Little Italy provides a unique identity and niche market for the corridor. Proposed improvements for East Dominick Street (Figure 18) include:

- Constructing a roundabout at Black River Boulevard/East Dominick Street;
- Constructing a landscaped median with a gateway marker between Black River Boulevard and the Mohawk River Bridge;
- Converting River Street to being one-way north;
- Constructing new sidewalks;
- Planting street trees;
- Installing period lighting;
- Installing landscaping and period lighting in the existing median between East Dominick Street and Railroad Street;
- Developing a marketing plan for Little Italy;

- Undertaking façade improvements consistent with the downtown design guidelines; and
- Encouraging improvements to structures and construction of new structures consistent with downtown design guidelines.

**Figure 18**

**Proposed roundabout and other improvements at Black River Boulevard and East Dominick Street**

Source: City of Rome Urban Design Plan



**Considerations and Recommendations**

- Most, if not all, of the proposed streetscape improvements will have positive impacts on the park and the visitor experience.
- The park should coordinate with the city as the projects described above move forward. The park and the city should communicate on a regular basis to ensure that the park is up-to-date on progress on these projects and so that the park and the city have accurate expectations of one another.

## Section 8: Bus Service

*The change of transit operators in Rome benefits the park, and possible increased regional transit service may benefit the park as well.*

### Current Conditions

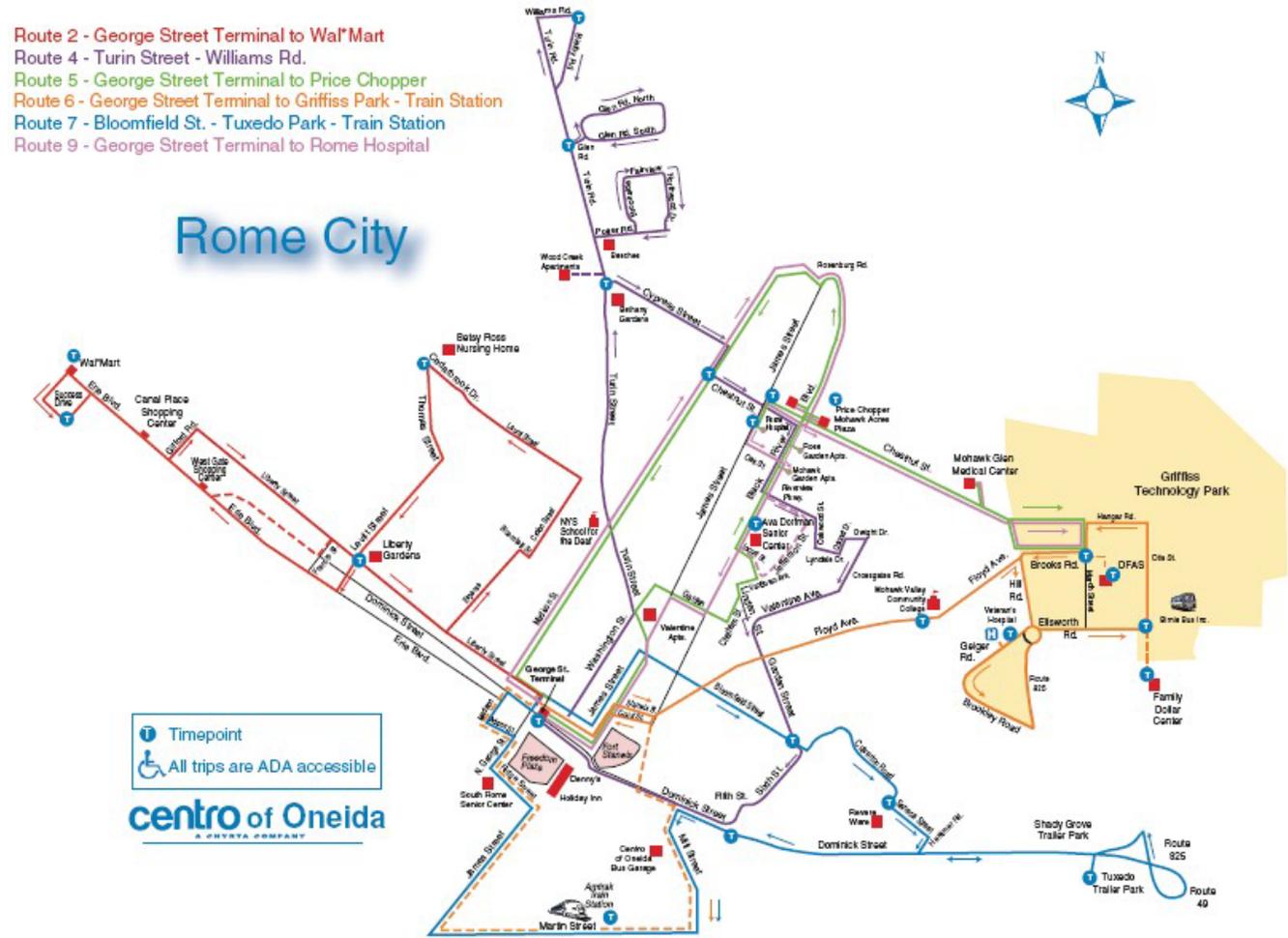
**School and charter buses** – According to the draft GMP, approximately 33 percent of all visitors to Fort Stanwix arrive by bus (primarily school groups) or carpool. These buses pull into one of two bus pullouts: the primary pullout area, which is located on the east side of North James Street across from West Dominick Street and is a short walk from this area to the front door of the Willett Center, or the secondary pullout site, which is located on the north side of Black River Boulevard as it approaches Spaghetti Junction. It is a longer walk from the Black River Boulevard pullout area to the front door of the Willett Center, and there is no signage present to guide visitors from this pullout to the Willett Center.

**Centro** – The Central New York Regional Transportation Authority (CNYRTA) operates Centro, which has six bus routes that serve as City of Rome’s public transit system (Figure 19). CNYRTA, a Syracuse-

**Figure 19**

### Rome bus routes

Source: Central New York Regional Transportation Authority, 2006 (<http://www.centro.org/schedules/oneida/rome2006.pdf>)



based regional transportation authority that serves Onondaga, Cayuga, Oswego, and Oneida counties, became the new operator of Rome's bus system when it took over operations from VIP Transit in a cost-savings move by local officials in October 2005. Centro started its service by using renovated VIP equipment, mostly 30-seat buses with new logos. In its last quarter of service (the third quarter of 2005), VIP had 31,881 passengers. In its first quarter of service (the fourth quarter of 2005), Centro had 36,887 passengers.

When CNYRTA began operation, the hub of the system was changed from the train station outside of the downtown on Martin Street to Liberty Plaza and the George Street parking garage downtown. Centro's bus schedule lists the following destinations as being served by the service: the Amtrak Train Station, Ava Dorfman Senior Center, Griffiss Technology Park, Mohawk Valley Community College, Price Chopper, Rome Hospital, and Wal Mart. The service runs between 7:00 am and 6:00 pm during the weekdays, 9:00 am and 5:00 pm on the weekends, and the routes take 30-40 minutes to complete one circuit. Four of the routes (Routes 4, 5, 7, and 9) run every one-and-a-half hours, and two of these routes (Routes 4 and 5) run more frequently during the morning and afternoon peak hours. The two other routes (Routes 2 and 6) run every 30 minutes during peak hours during the weekdays and 45 minutes during the day and on weekends.

Five of the six routes pass by the fort, with four of these five going south on North James Street and then all five going west on East Dominick Street. The bus will stop for people who wave at the bus driver at any intersection along the route and a ride on the bus costs \$.75. Centro also provides Dial-A-Ride service for senior citizens and people with disabilities. The re-designation of the George Street parking garage as the hub of the system and the policy of stopping for passengers at almost every intersection benefits the park by exposing people to the fort and by allowing more people to stop at the fort.

*Birnie Bus Service* – Birnie Bus Service, Inc. (BBS) is a privately owned company that provides interurban transportation in central New York and rural public transportation in Oneida and Herkimer Counties. Birnie Bus also offers charter service to private groups and schools in the region. Interurban routes run between Rome and Little Falls and Rome and Syracuse. The fares charged by BBS are on a zone-to-zone system in accordance with an approved tariff. BBS has its major office and garage facilities in Rome. BBS maintains agreements with the counties of Oneida and Herkimer, in which state and federal operating assistance grants are passed from the counties to BBS in return for providing mass transit service within the counties. The rural transportation service area includes Boonville, Utica, Camden, Remsen, Floyd, Chadwicks, Rome, Sauquoit, Taberg, and Barneveld. BBS also provides public bus service and Medicaid patient transportation to Oswego County.

*Turning Stone Resort and Casino* – The resort runs a shuttle service for guests and employees to parking areas and venues within their property. Tour buses that bring guests to gamble at the resort sit idle for the remainder of their stay in an off-site parking lot.

## **Future Conditions**

*Themed shuttle* – Several organizations and officials have discussed creating a themed shuttle to connect Fort Stanwix with other area attractions. Past discussions considered running a shuttle between Fort Stanwix and Oriskany Battlefield (in 2002, a shuttle temporarily ran between Fort Stanwix and Oriskany Battlefield for the sites' 225-year anniversary), and more recent discussions have considered running a shuttle in the downtown area and between Fort Stanwix, Turning Stone Casino, Erie Canal Village, and other destinations.

At a meeting with park staff in January 2006, city staff from the Planning and Community Development Department and Rome Main Streets discussed the possibility of having a shuttle serve destinations in the downtown area. A painted bus would be less expensive than a trolley, and Birnie Bus could supply and maintain the bus. The city, Main Streets, and the park could share the cost. To justify the shuttle, an estimate of usage would be necessary. The bus could go out to farther destinations (Erie Canal Village, Turning Stone Resort and Casino, Oriskany, etc.) a few times a day. The bus could have a public address

system that could be used by a narrator to describe what point of interest was approaching. This narration/interpretive component could be a compact disc or a live person, and it could be one or the other at different points in the day/season. A CD could be sold at the gift shop in the Willett Center as a self-guided tour of the area. The bus could have a video component in addition to, or instead of, the narration. Separate from the January meeting, the city has mentioned wanting to meet with people at Amtrak, Fort Stanwix, Erie Canal Village, and Turning Stone Resort and Casino about creating a weekend package with a historical angle.

*Centro* – Centro would like to look into needs, demands, and the feasibility for extending their service. Due to the recent opening of the Family Dollar distribution center in Griffiss Technology Park, which employs approximately 400 people, some of whom come from Utica, Centro may alter routes in Griffiss and may start a Utica-Rome service. Centro also mentioned exploring the feasibility of adding service to Turning Stone Resort and Casino for customers and employees.

### **Considerations and Recommendations**

- Table 1 in Section 2 shows a general distribution of area attractions. If approached, the park should work with partners to study the feasibility of a local or regional themed shuttle service. Likely partners for a shared shuttle include the city, Erie Canal Village, and Turning Stone Resort and Casino.
- The park should contact Centro to have Fort Stanwix listed as a destination on the Rome bus schedule.
- To encourage modes other than driving, the park should provide copies of the bus schedule and route map to visitors and should be prepared to tell visitors how they can take the bus.

## Section 9: Pedestrian Facilities

*Surrounded by major street and highways, the fort needs to have safe pedestrian facilities and connections to surrounding parking lots, businesses, neighborhoods, and destinations.*

### Current Conditions

Visitor use and experience is affected by the ease of access to a site, and pedestrian access to the fort, whether it is after a visitor parks a vehicle or it is a citizen walking from any of the surrounding areas, is not easy. Fort Stanwix is an island in the center of Rome and pedestrian access is hazardous from all directions. Surrounded by major arterials and state highways, all pedestrians entering the fort must cross at least four lanes of busy traffic unless they arrive by bus, in which case they exit at one of the bus pullout areas. Pedestrian safety has become a more important issue since the opening of the Willett Center since more people now visit the fort and they visit year round.

*Pedestrian safety* – As part of its long-range transportation plan, HOCTS analyzed Herkimer and Oneida Counties pedestrian accident data from the New York State Department of Motor Vehicles for the years 1999, 2000 and 2001. According to HOCTS, their finding underscored the need for safer pedestrian facilities and increased safety education and enforcement programs in the two-county area: for pedestrians between 1999 and 2001, there were 292 injuries and 11 fatalities in Oneida County and the majority of these injuries or deaths occurred while the pedestrian was crossing at street locations without a crosswalk or signal. The specific location of these injuries and fatalities is unknown.

*Crosswalks* – Visitors who park in the lots surrounding the fort and people who walk to the fort from downtown Rome to the west or from one of the neighborhoods or businesses adjacent to the park must cross wide and busy streets to get to the fort. While some of the crosswalks to the fort are marked and signalized, others are not marked and/or are not signalized. Below is a description of the state of crosswalks at major intersections around the fort.

North James Street and West Dominick Street – The T intersection of North James Street and West Dominick Street is not signalized for vehicular traffic in any direction. While there are marked pedestrian crossings on the south and west sides of the intersection, the north side (Figure 20, B) is not marked for pedestrians to cross.

As discussed in Section 6, many visitors to Fort Stanwix who arrive by motor vehicle park in the Liberty-James Parking Garage, which is approximately 400 feet north of the North James Street intersection with West Dominick Street. Since the fort and the Willett Center are visible upon emerging from the garage, pedestrians tend to look for the shortest route to the fort, which is to cross North James Street.

To cross to the fort from the northwest corner using marked crossings, pedestrians must first cross West Dominick Street and then the south side of North James Street. Since this sequence is inconvenient, people may choose to cross the unmarked north side of the intersection or cross mid-block across North James Street. While the North James Street crossing at West Liberty Street is marked and signalized, it involves a short walk in the opposite direction of the Willett Center, so many visitors do not take this safer, yet indirect route.

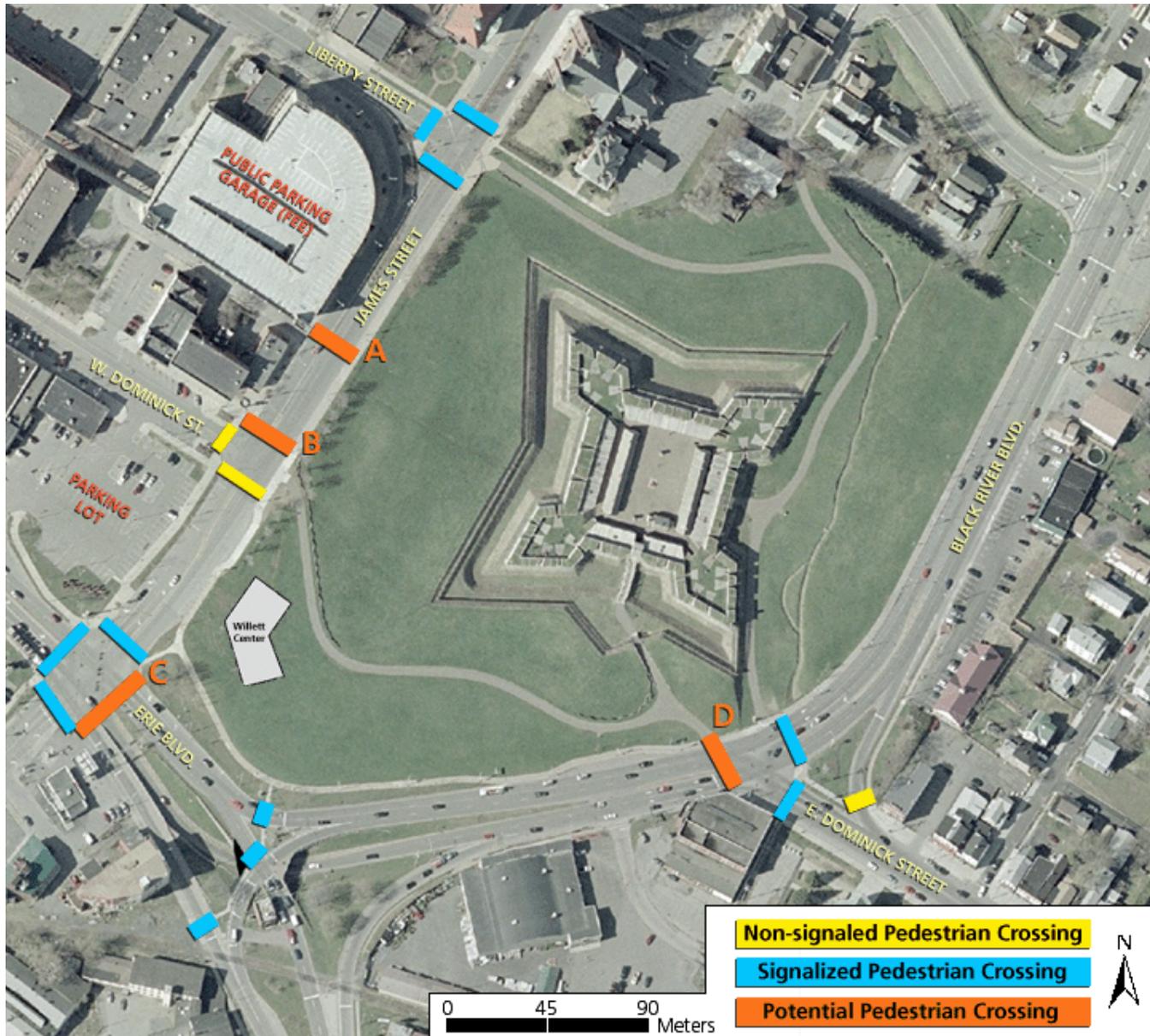
North James Street and Erie Boulevard – The intersection of North James Street and Erie Boulevard is signalized for vehicular traffic in all directions. While there are signalized pedestrian crossings on the north, south, and west sides of the intersection, the east side (Figure 20, C) is not marked or signalized for pedestrians to cross.

While few people may park for the fort on the southeast corner of North James Street and Erie Boulevard, if pedestrians wanted to cross Erie Boulevard to the fort or cross from the fort to the buildings on the southeast corner using signalized crosswalks, pedestrians must make three crossings: twice across North James Street and once across the west side of the intersection. Because making three crossings is

inconvenient when one would suffice, pedestrians may choose to cross Erie Boulevard at the unmarked and non-signalized east side of the intersection. This crossing would be highly dangerous since this is a very busy intersection.

**Figure 20**  
**Intersections and crosswalks surrounding Fort Stanwix**

Source: Volpe Center, 2006.



*Aerial photo from New York City, 2003*

Spaghetti Junction – The confluence of Black River Boulevard and Erie Boulevard is a hazardous place for pedestrians. Pedestrians can cross this intersection in only one way: between the north side on park property and the southwest side of Erie Boulevard via three marked and signalized crossings. Because there is no other way to cross the intersection except for this series of crosswalks, pedestrians have no official way to cross the south side of the intersection across Erie Boulevard or the east side of the

intersection across Black River Boulevard. The underpass makes crossing this side of Black River Boulevard even more dangerous.

Black River Boulevard and East Dominick Street – The T intersection of Black River Boulevard and East Dominick Street is signalized for vehicular traffic in all directions. While there are signalized pedestrian crossings on the north and east sides of the intersection, the south side (Figure 20, D) is not marked or signalized for pedestrians to cross. A crosswalk across the right-hand turn lane from East Dominick Street to Black River Boulevard is marked but not signalized.

To cross to the fort from the southern corner using pedestrian signals, pedestrians must first cross East Dominick Street and then Black River Boulevard. This is inconvenient for visitors, who may choose to cross Black River Boulevard at the unmarked and non-signalized south side of the intersection.

*Accessibility* – Some of the distances from the parking sites make access difficult for the physically disabled. The parking garage is accessible to persons in wheelchairs as it has an elevator. Concrete city sidewalks leading from the garage to the Fort are accessible to persons in wheelchairs.

*North Country National Scenic Trail* – The North Country National Scenic Trail is a hiking trail that stretches for about 4,600 miles. The trail links communities, forests, and prairies across seven northern states (New York, Pennsylvania, Ohio, Michigan, Wisconsin, Minnesota, and North Dakota). Currently, more than 1,700 miles have been certified off-road, and additional miles follow shared paths and roads. When completed, it will be the longest off-road hiking trail in the United States. While the trail passes through Rome, its exact alignment has not yet been established, so several options exist. The trail's website prominently mentions Fort Stanwix as being an attraction to visit when passing through Rome.

*Regional levels of walking and bicycling* – A statewide survey conducted for New York State MPOs in 2000 included approximately 300 people in the central New York area. With regards to bicycle and pedestrian planning, the survey found that:

- 11% of the respondents use walking as means of transportation on a weekly basis;
- 2% of the respondents use bicycling as a means of transportation on a weekly basis;
- 30% of the respondents use walking or bicycling for recreation on a weekly basis; and
- 75% of the respondents support bicycle trails, sidewalks, access to outdoor recreation, and noise reduction projects.

## **Future Conditions**

### *Crosswalk improvements*

North James Street and West Dominick Street – As discussed in Section 7, the city sketched out a design for the creation of a raised intersection with an embedded design in its Urban Design Plan (Figure 17).

Spaghetti Junction – As discussed in Section 5, the city sketched out a design for the creation of an at-grade intersection where Spaghetti Junction is located (Figure 14).

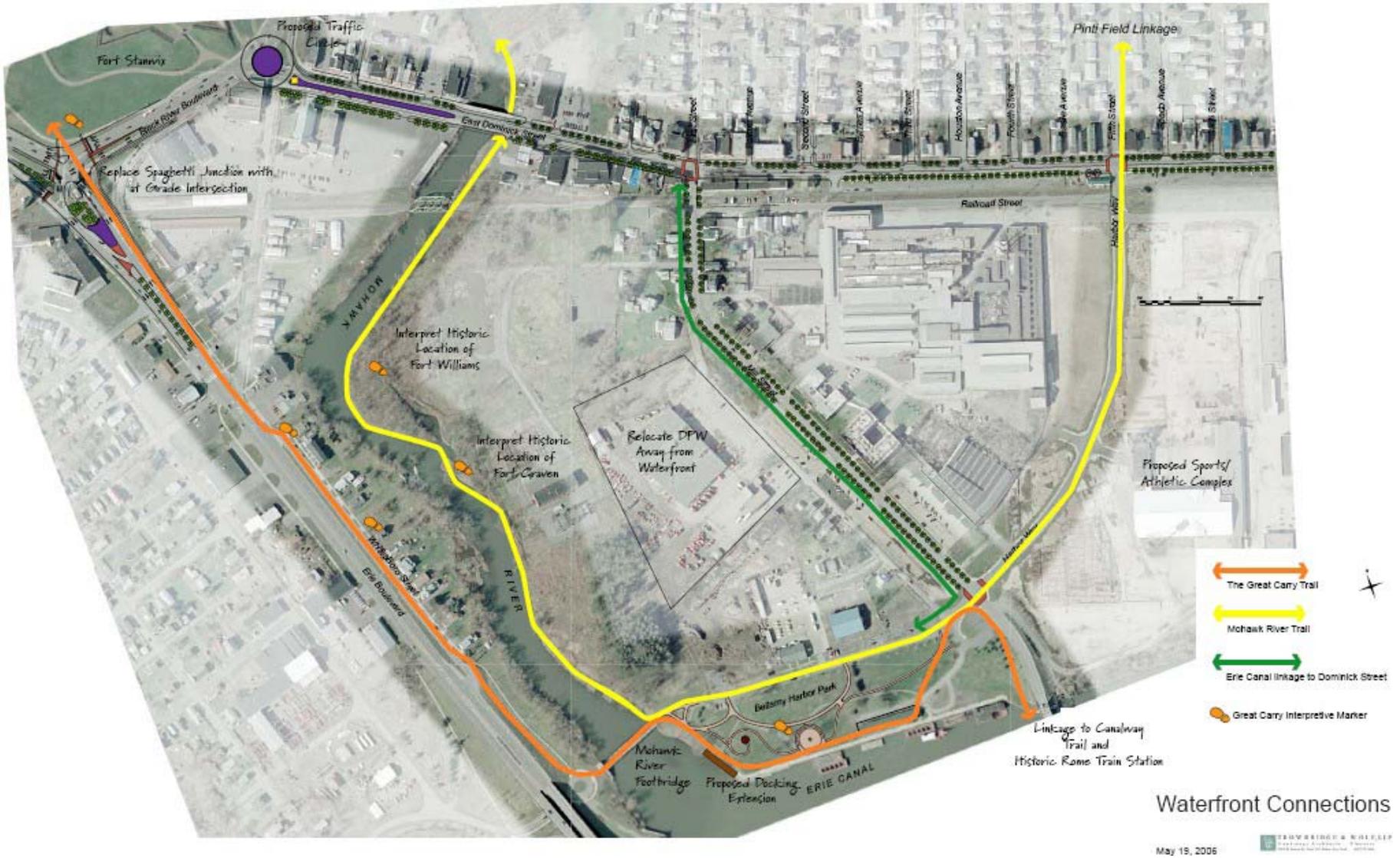
Black River Boulevard and East Dominick Street – Also as discussed in Section 5, the city sketched out a design for the creation of a roundabout in this location (Figure 15). It is not clear from the sketch where pedestrian crossings would be located.

*Waterfront connection improvements* – The City of Rome's Urban Design Plan (2006) discusses improving existing connections and creating new connections to the Erie Canal and the Mohawk River. According to the plan, both waterways represent underutilized passive and active recreational opportunities. Bellamy Harbor Park is an attractive waterfront park on the Erie Canal, but is not well linked to the city's street system, and visitors arriving to the park by boat are offered little encouragement to explore the city.

Development of pedestrian linkages is proposed between the Main Street Corridors (West Dominick Street, North James Street, and East Dominick Street) and the Erie Canal at Bellamy Harbor Park (Figure

**Figure 21**  
**Proposed trails connecting the waterfront, downtown, and Fort Stanwix**

Source: City of Rome Urban Design Plan, 2006



21). The goal of these linkages is to encourage residents of the city to walk to Bellamy Harbor Park and the commercial corridors of the three main streets, visitors to the fort to walk to Bellamy Harbor Park and the commercial corridors of the three main streets, and visitors arriving at Bellamy Harbor Park by boat to walk to the fort and the commercial corridors of the three main streets. The following linkages are proposed: Mohawk River Trail, Mill Street to East Dominick Street, and a Great Carry Trail.

Mohawk River Trail – The Mohawk River Trail is proposed to be located along the east side of the Mohawk River, west of the Department of Public Works site. The trail will link the existing Black River Trail and Black River Recreation Area to the north with Bellamy Harbor Park on the Erie Canal, and continue west along Harbor Way to provide linkage to Pinti Field and surrounding neighborhoods. The Harbor Way segment of the trail would utilize existing city streets. The City of Rome Planning Department is utilizing environmental protection funding to complete a trails study that will examine the feasibility of route options and establish a project timeline. The following section discusses the full extent of the Mohawk River Trail in more detail.

Mill Street to East Dominick Street – Through the developing East Rome Business Park, an improved linkage via Mill Street will provide more direct pedestrian access to East Dominick Street and the fort. The development of this pedestrian walkway, using environmental protection funding, is proposed for 2006. The goal is to provide easy and safe resident access to Bellamy Harbor Park and to encourage watercraft and trail visitors to explore the Main Street Corridor shops and eateries and to visit the Willett Center at the fort.

The Great Carry Trail (De O Wain Sta) – The Great Carry, known as the De O Wain Sta by the Iroquois, was an overland trail that connected people who boated the Mohawk River to Wood Creek. The trail was important to Native Americans and early European traders because it was the portage needed to connect the Great Lakes to the Atlantic Ocean through the Hudson River. Native Americans and traders carried boats on their backs along this landside route. The British army, realizing its importance, set up several forts including Fort Stanwix to control and protect the route. The historic route of the Great Carry ran from Fort Stanwix south along the west side of the Mohawk River. On average, this trail was about three miles long, depending on the season and how navigable the waterways were at the time.

The proposed route of the trail would extend from the Willett Center south on James Street to a crosswalk to Whitesboro Street. From Whitesboro Street, the trail will cross over the Mohawk River where it converges with the Erie Canal, via an existing pedestrian bridge providing direct access to Bellamy Harbor Park and the Canal. From Bellamy Harbor Park, the trail will cross over the Canal via the Mill Street Bridge and end at the Rome Train Station. Interpretive signage is proposed at Bellamy Harbor Park and along Whitesboro Street that is coordinated with existing interpretive signage at the Willett Center.

*Link Trail* – Stakeholders, including the New York State Office of Parks, Recreation, and Historic Preservation, have been discussing the creation of a formal pedestrian link between the Oriskany Battlefield State Historic Site and the Canalway Trail to strengthen the relationship between Fort Stanwix, Oriskany Battlefield, and Herkimer Home State Historic Site. The Link Trail is currently just in the discussion phase since many unmet needs exist, foremost of which is funding for the planning and creation of the trail.

*North Country National Scenic Trail* – The North Country National Scenic Trail is about 51% complete. When completed, it will be the longest off-road hiking trail in the United States.

## **Considerations and Recommendations**

*Crosswalk improvements* – Since pedestrians generally take the shortest distance to arrive at their destination, the park should work with the City of Rome to evaluate the possibility of adding pedestrian crossings and pedestrian signals at the locations described below. These crosswalk improvements should include handicap ramps for both sides, a depression in medians for wheelchairs, and pavement striping to

Manual of Uniform Traffic Control Devices (MUTCD) guidelines. The city should consider using longer lasting thermoplastic for the pavement striping and pedestrian signals that visually countdown the number of seconds remaining to cross with the walk symbol. The city should maintain the new crossing as part of the infrastructure within the public right of way.

Mid-block crossing on North James Street – The park should work with the city to study the need and feasibility to create a mid-block crossing for pedestrians exiting the Liberty-James parking garage (Figure 20, A). This crossing could be raised and could include signage and lighting to alert on-coming motorists. This option should be considered more seriously if the park and the city agree to the park using the parking garage exclusively for visitor parking and/or if the sign into the parking garage is changed to “Fort Stanwix Parking Garage” since this change would guide more visitors to park in the garage than in any other location. Curb cuts for this crosswalk would have to be installed, and the median should be extended to serve as a pedestrian refuge island.

North James Street and West Dominick Street – The park should work with the city to have a crosswalk on the north side of the intersection (Figure 20, B) marked for visitors crossing from and to the northwest corner of North James Street and Erie Boulevard. Curb cuts for this crosswalk have already been installed on both sides of the street. Extending the existing median south could serve as a crossing island to further help pedestrians crossing on this side of the street. A median could be installed and used as a crossing island on the south side of this intersection as well.

The park and the city should also consider creating a raised intersection (similar to that in Figure 17) and installing traffic control signage and signals (for example, yellow flashing lights) to make the intersection more visible and prominent. Further, the park and the city should evaluate the intersection for a traffic signal with pedestrian actuated signals. A signal warrant analysis should be performed based on traffic data for vehicles and visitor projections.

North James Street and Erie Boulevard – The park should work with the city to have the east side of the intersection (Figure 20, C) marked and signalized for visitors crossing from the southeast corner of North James Street and Erie Boulevard.

Spaghetti Junction – As discussed in Section 5, the park should coordinate with the city as plans move forward to change Spaghetti Junction into an at-grade intersection. The park should ensure that there are marked and signalized pedestrian crossings across the sides of each intersection.

Black River Boulevard and East Dominick Street – The park should work with the city to have the south side of the intersection (Figure 20, D) marked and signalized for visitors crossing from and to the southeast corner of Black River Boulevard and East Dominick Street. The south side of this intersection is an important crossing to mark and signalize since visitors to the fort may park in the lots around the buildings and along East Dominick Street on the southeast corner of Black River Boulevard and East Dominick Street. If the city is planning on installing a roundabout in this location, then the park should work with the city to ensure that safe pedestrian crossings are provided across the sides of each intersection.

*Waterfront connection improvements* – The city’s planned connections between Bellamy Harbor Park and the Main Street Corridors would benefit the park by connecting more visitors to the fort and by extending the visitor’s experience with the fort and its history, primarily through the Great Carry Trail.

Mohawk River Trail – According to the city’s Urban Design Plan (2006), the city does not currently control the land along the river but should establish as a long-term goal the development of the trail in this location.

The Great Carry Trail (De O Wain Sta) – The park should work with the city to develop the Great Carry Trail including interpretive signage beginning at the Willett Center where the story of the Great Carry is already highlighted to visitors. The Great Carry Trail can be an extension of the story being interpreted at the Willett Center and would allow visitors to experience and visualize the historic route. If created, a

crosswalk would need to be created over the terminus of Black River Boulevard, which would probably necessitate the changing of Spaghetti Junction to an at-grade intersection.

*Accessibility* – When possible, the park should work with the city in undertaking a review of Americans With Disabilities Act (ADA) requirements in the garage structure and path to the fort, particularly if the park and the city agree to the park using the parking garage exclusively for visitor parking and/or if the sign into the parking garage is changed to “Fort Stanwix Parking Garage” since this change would guide more visitors to park in the garage than in any other location.

*North Country National Scenic Trail* – As the trail is completed and its alignment through Rome is established, more hikers will pass through Rome and will likely stop at the fort. The park should keep in contact with the North Country Trail Association as it establishes the alignment of the trail through Rome and continues to list and describe area attractions.

*Link Trail* – The park should keep in contact with other stakeholders about the possibility of creating a trail between the Oriskany Battlefield State Historic Site and the Canalway Trail to strengthen the relationship between Fort Stanwix, Oriskany Battlefield, and Herkimer Home State Historic Site.

## Section 10: Bicyclist Facilities

The city is planning on developing several bicycle/multi-use trails that will connect the Erie Canal to Fort Stanwix, the downtown, and other nearby destinations.

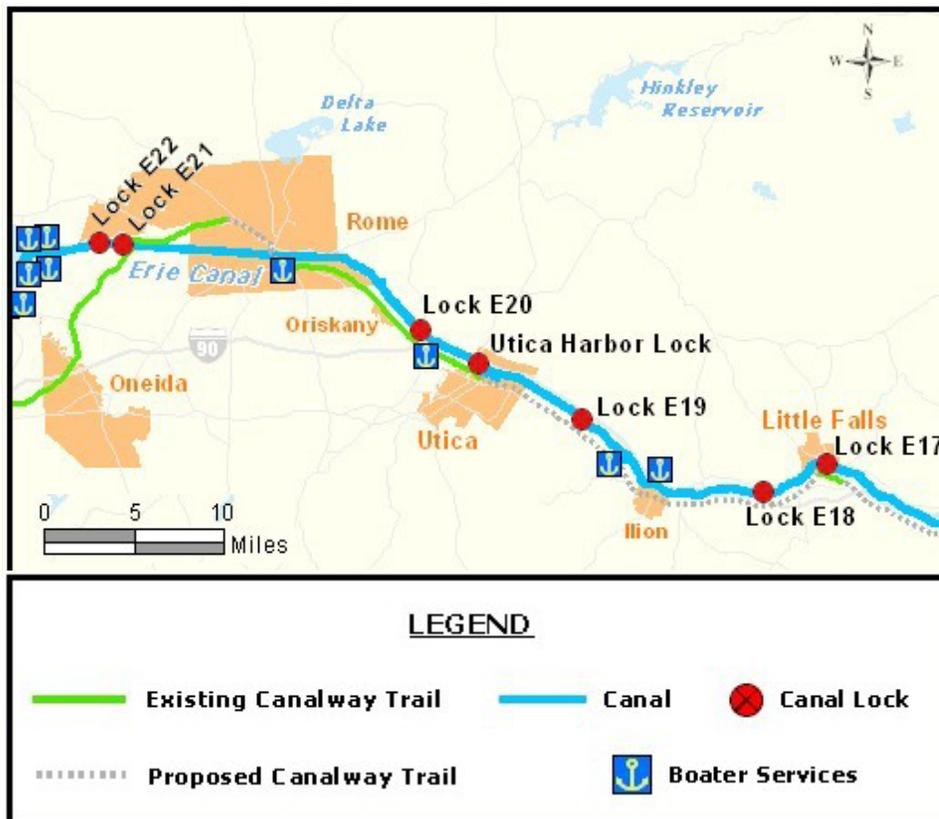
### Current Conditions

The roadway system around the park is not particularly accommodating to bicycles. High traffic volumes, highway ramps, and complicated intersections discourage most cyclists. There is a bicycle rack at the Willett Center for visitors and employees. There are no designated bicycle routes that pass the fort.

*New York State Canalway Trail* – The goal of the land-based Canalway Trail program is to establish an end-to-end, multi-use trail along the Canal System that will be nearly 500 miles long, making it the longest multi-use trail in the United States. Approximately 245 miles of Canalway Trail are currently in use, located primarily in three segments in the Albany, Syracuse, and Rochester areas. On the east side of the city, the trail ends near Martin Street and on the west side of the city, the trail ends at Erie Canal Village. The approximate distance between these two points is four miles. Figure 22 shows the trail’s status in the Oneida County region.

**Figure 22**  
**Completed portions of the Canalway Trail system in and around Rome**

Source: New York State Canal System



The Canalway Trail program involves linking the existing segments of completed trail and reconstructing deteriorating sections of trail to provide a consistent high-quality resource. Trailhead parking areas with interpretive kiosks, benches, and landscaping are also included in the program. Biker-hiker-boater

campsites are being installed at 30-mile increments to better facilitate long-distance touring along the trail. The Canalway Trail has not been completed through the City of Rome.

*New York State Designated Bicycle Routes* – Bicycle Route 5 is a NYS cross-state on-street bicycle route that generally parallels the route of the Erie Canal, bisecting the state west to east between Niagara Falls and Albany. The 365-mile bicycle route has special signage and a painted stripe separating the shoulder from the motor vehicle travel lanes. Bicycle Route 5 approaches Rome on the east via State Route 49 and then dips south of the city without going through the downtown area on State Route 365. Typically Bicycle Route 5 has shoulder widths of four to six feet and the vehicular speed limit is 55 mph. According to the HOCTS Long Range Transportation Plan (2004), there continues to be a strong interest in trail development in the Herkimer-Oneida Counties area and there is an emphasis on creating connections to form a network of trails where possible.

*Bicycle improvements in the area* – In addition to the completion of the Canalway trail, the HOCTS Long Range Transportation Plan lists several bicycle improvements slated for the Rome area and their status:

- Painted bike lanes on Erie Boulevard – not completed,
- Develop a painted bike lane network for Rome – not programmed,
- Improve the Black River Trail between Rome and Boonville – completed,
- A bicycle trail through the Griffiss Business and Technology Park – completed, and
- A bicycle trail along Routes 46/49 connecting the Canalway Trail to the Rome Sand Plains – programmed.

Phase II of the Griffiss Park trail will connect the Black River to the Erie Canalway Trail. Long-term and on-going improvements include improving shoulders where needed and developing a region-wide continuity of the Bicycle and Pedestrian Routes System with the NYSDOT bicycle routes including route numbering.

### **Future Conditions**

The city is seeking to develop and link its unique waterfront, heritage, and cultural assets in order to help diversify an economy that has faced repeated setbacks with the fall of one dominant industry after another within a 40 year span. Through these experiences, the city believes that a strategy of economic diversification will serve the community better in the long run than reliance on one overriding industry. The trails the city is developing are the Erie Canalway Trail, the Mohawk River Trail, the Great Carry Trail (De O Wain Sta) (discussed in the previous section), and trails in the Rome Sand Plains. Possible alignments for these trails are represented in Figure 23. These trail projects are part of recent efforts to achieve greater economic diversity by attracting and nurturing heritage, arts, and technology-oriented small businesses, which look for tolerant and creative communities with vibrant and walkable downtowns. Using the city's historic waterways as a base for the development of a connected trail system is consistent with city, regional, state, and national plans and strategies.

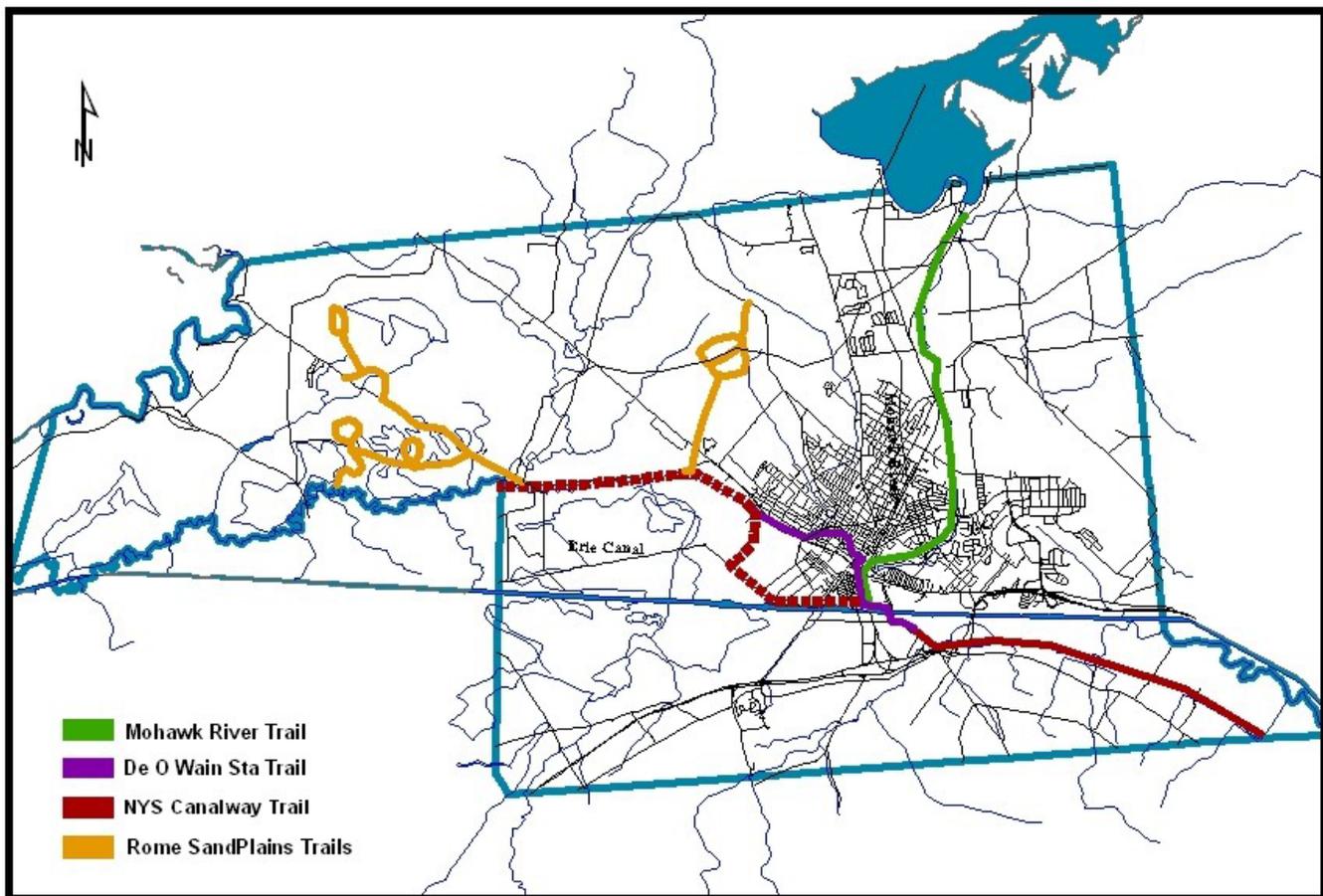
*Erie Canalway Trail* – When completed, the Canalway Trail will be the longest multi-use trail in the United States, making it a significant eco-tourism destination. In 2005, New York State appropriated \$2.6 million in transportation funding to complete the Oriskany Trail segment of the Canalway Trail, which currently ends near Martin Street. The New York State Canal Corporation is currently working with Rome to define the trail route via Martin Street over the canal to Bellamy Harbor Park and then along Muck Road to Erie Canal Village, where the trail already exists to Syracuse. Construction is scheduled for 2009-10.

*Mohawk River Trail* – The City of Rome received a 2004 technical assistance grant from the National Park Service's Rivers, Trails, and Conservation Assistance program to develop a plan for a multi-use trail along the Mohawk River. In July 2005, Governor Pataki announced that the City of Rome would receive a \$100,000 environmental grant to complete construction drawings for the Mohawk River Trail from Bellamy Harbor Park to Delta Lake State Park and to implement streetscape improvements along the city's waterfront.

The City of Rome plans to create the Mohawk River Trail, which will be 5.5 miles long and 10 feet wide, to accommodate bicyclists, pedestrians, strollers, and cross country skiers. Certain sections may also allow snowmobilers in the winter. The trail will include trail heads, wayfinding signs, and other typical trail amenities. Specific objectives of the project are to: 1) improve physical connections between the city's waterfront and downtown, 2) improve walkability, 3) welcome visitors on the Erie Canal and at Fort Stanwix and encourage them to include the city as a part of their visit, 4) create a unified connector among the these sites, 5) improve the visual appearance and impact of the city for all visitors and residents, 6) improve wayfinding, and 7) strengthen connections with regional and statewide trails, cultural sites, and features.

**Figure 23**  
**Possible trail alignments through and around the city of Rome**

Source: City of Rome



### Considerations and Recommendations

- The park should work with the city in developing the bicycle/multi-use trails as described above. If possible and deemed appropriate, the park should create interpretive signs along the trails in coordination with the city and other stakeholders.
- The park should work with the city in developing wayfinding signage from the trails along the canal to the downtown to ensure that the fort is featured prominently on such signage.
- Upon completion of the trails, the park may want to consider providing more bicycle parking for bicyclists who stop along their journey at Fort Stanwix.

## Section 11: The Erie Canal

*The park can take advantage of the increase in recreational boating along the Erie Canal by strengthening connections between the canal and Fort Stanwix.*

### Current Conditions

Besides being a catalyst for growth in the Mohawk and Hudson valleys, the Erie Canal and other canals in the New York State Canal System helped open up the western United States for settlement and for many years transported much of the Midwest's agricultural and industrial products to domestic and international markets. The canals also played a key role in turning New York City into an international center for commerce, industry, and finance. In light of commercial traffic on the canal declining precipitously during the second half of the twentieth century due to the growth of the highway system, railroads, and the Saint Lawrence Seaway, the use of the Canal system has been primarily by recreational traffic since the 1990s.

Over its nearly 200-year history, there have been varying alignments of the Erie Canal. While the historic Erie Canal used to run right through downtown Rome, the current alignment now runs south of town. The historic alignment was filled and is now Erie Boulevard. There are over 30 locks along the Erie Canal, and four locks are within a 10-mile radius of the fort.

The Erie Canal is open to small craft and some larger vessels for most of the year. During the winter, water is drained from parts of the canal to enable repairs and maintenance. The annual boating season runs from May through November. Today the Erie Canal Corridor covers 524 miles of navigable water from Lake Champlain to the Capital Region and west to Lake Erie. Nearly 2.7 million people live within 25 miles of the canal, which is approximately 75% of upstate New York's population.

In 2006, recreational boating usage fees were eliminated in hopes of attracting more visitors to the canal system. According to a press release from the New York State Canal Corporation\*, usage of the Canal System by recreational vessels from May through August of 2005 was up 6.7% from the same period in 2004. A total of 93,026 recreational lockings have been recorded at the Canal System's 57 locks and 17 lift bridges through the end of August, compared to 87,178 for the same period last year - an increase of 5,848. In 2004, a total of 122,034 recreational lockings were recorded, a mark likely to be surpassed in 2005 given the rise in activity. Motorboating Magazine, a national publication, recently rated the Canal System as one of ten Great Escape boating vacations in the world. The New York State Canal Recreationway Commission is developing a plan to promote increased canal pleasure boating.

Under Governor Pataki's Canal Revitalization Program, the Canal Corporation has invested \$13 million to develop seven harbors and \$20 million for fourteen Canalway Trail projects, including 98 miles of trail construction. In partnership with other state agencies, the Canal Corporation has also helped implement more than \$200 million in local projects along the Canal System. Since 1992, the Thruway Authority has contributed more than \$575 million to the operation, maintenance, development and improvement of the Canal System and its surrounding communities.

The Canal Corporation also announced that lockings recorded for commercial vessels rose over the same period from 11,357 in 2004 to 13,032 this year, an increase of 14.7%. Included in this category are tour boats, charter boats, and cargo vessels. The Canal Corporation anticipates continued increases in commercial use of the waterway, especially with regard to tug and barge transportation of commodities. In 2004, an estimated \$102 million worth of cargo was shipped on the Canal System.

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\* New York State Canal Corporation. "Canal Corporation Announces Increase In Recreational Use Of Canal System." September 27, 2005. <http://www.nycanal.com/pressrelease/increaserecreationalusecanalsystem.html>

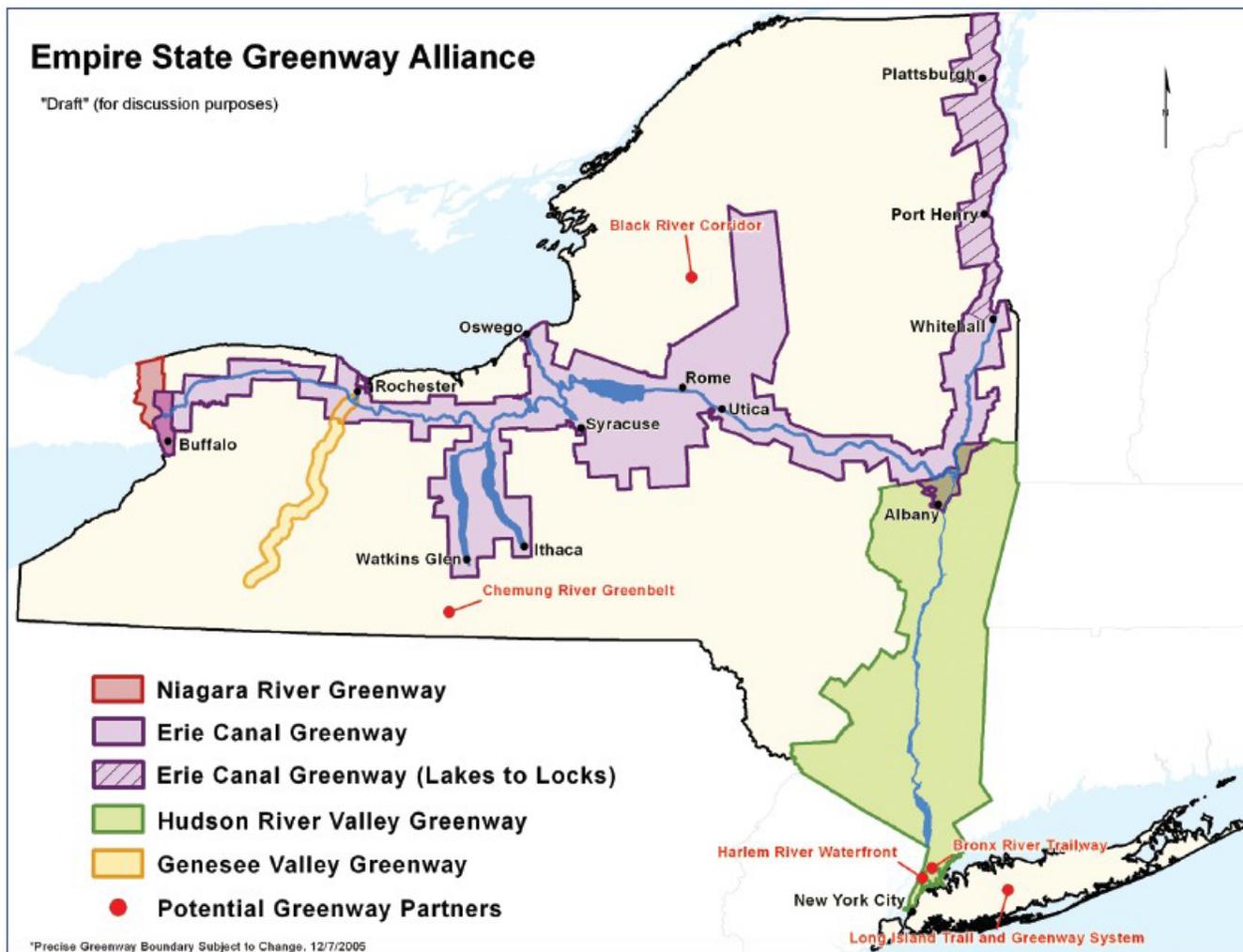
The Erie Canalway Trail, which runs or is planned to run parallel to most of the current alignment of the canal, is covered in Sections 9 (Pedestrian Facilities) and 10 (Bicyclist Facilities) of this report. Bellamy Harbor Park, which runs along the northern shore of the canal, is covered in Section 2 (Area Attractions).

### Future Conditions

Many stakeholders would like to see recreational use of the canal increase for decades to come. *A Report on the Future of New York State Canals*, December 2005, crafted by the New York State Canal Corporation Interagency Task Force, recommends the dissolution of the Canal Recreationway Commission and the creation of an Erie Canal Greenway based on the models of the Hudson Valley River Greenway and the Niagara River Greenway. The Erie Canal Greenway would be administered through the Canal Corporation and would consist of a governing board (known as the Erie Canalway Greenway Council). A representative from the Erie Canalway National Heritage Corridor Commission would be invited to be a member of the Council. The report also recommends that an Empire State Greenway Alliance be created to represent and coordinate between the Greenways at the state level (Figure 24).

**Figure 24**  
**The Greenways of the Empire State Greenway Alliance (Erie Canal Greenway is proposed)**

Source: A Report on the Future of New York State Canals, December 2005



The borders of the Erie Canal Greenway would roughly follow that of the Heritage Corridor, but would extend north from Albany to Canada, would be wider between Syracuse and Rome, and would include all of Herkimer County. According to the report, while the Canal Corporation staff has been responsive to community needs whenever possible, the Canal Corporation has traditionally been a transportation-minded organization. A new initiative is needed to refocus the mission of the Canal Corporation, making it proactive in pursuing locally driven canal-related revitalization, rather than reactive. While the Erie Canal Greenway Council should be established to serve as an advisory council to the Canal Corporation, the Greenway should have its own support staff and land-use planners, experienced in the fields of community development, waterfront revitalization and tourism promotion.

#### **Considerations and Recommendations**

- The park should work with partners at the New York State Canal Corporation and/or at the Erie Canal Greenway to support an increase in recreational boating along the canal and to promote visitation between the Erie Canal and Fort Stanwix.

## Section 12: Rome Train Station and Rail Service

*While the Rome Train Station has not reached its goal of becoming Rome's multimodal transportation center, rail service to Rome remains important, and the potential for connections to the fort remain possible.*

### Current Conditions

*Rome Station* – In 1914, the New York Central Railroad built a new train station about a mile south of the city across the canal to replace the former structure downtown. This move was necessary due to track realignment. In 1999, the City of Rome undertook a study to evaluate the structural deterioration and leakage of the Rome Train Station, offer passengers a more user-friendly facility, and address compliance with Americans with Disabilities Act requirements, as well as those of CSX and Amtrak. In August 2001, the City of Rome began an initiative to make necessary improvements to turn the Rome Train Station into a multimodal transportation center.

In April 2004, the city held a grand opening of the multimodal transportation center at the renovated train station (Figure 25). The renovation included the rehabilitation of the station interior with emphasis on safety and alterations to comply with the Americans with Disabilities Act. With trains already stopping at the station, the idea was to have the station be the hub of bus (both public and charter) and taxi service for the city as well. Bicycle and pedestrian access was to be provided by on and off road facilities.

**Figure 25**  
**The renovated Rome Train Station**

Source: Volpe Center, 2006



While the city hoped that a private tenant, such as a taxi company, would move into the station, no company moved in. VIP Transit, however, did move its headquarters to the station. When Centro took over local bus operations from VIP Transit in October 2005, Centro, in response to public input, changed the hub of operations from the Rome Train Station back to the George Street parking garage in downtown Rome. The office space formerly occupied by VIP Transit is now vacant and only one bus route now serves the train station. The times that this bus (Route 7) stops at the station do not coincide closely with the arrivals and departures of train travelers. There is no safe and convenient pedestrian access from the station across the canal and on to the fort. There is one taxi company in Rome, but it does not offer night service and is available on an on call basis only.

*Passenger Train Service* – Amtrak's 462-mile Empire Service provides three westbound trains to Niagara Falls (approximately five hours away) with stops in Syracuse, Rochester, and Buffalo, and three southbound trains to New York City (approximately five hours away) via Albany. One of these trains in each direction is part of the Maple Leaf route, so travelers can go west as far as Toronto (approximately

seven hours away) or south via connecting service to Washington, DC (approximately ten hours away). On weekdays, southbound trains stop at 8:04 AM, 1:05 PM, and 4:05 PM, and westbound trains stop at 11:53 AM, 3:18 PM, and 6:18 PM.

Amtrak recorded that in fiscal year 2005 (October 2004 to September 2005), 3,108 people boarded trains in Rome and 3,335 disembarked for a total of 6,443 total passengers. This number is down by 90 from 2004 when there were 6,533 passengers who got on or off a train in Rome (3,136 on and 3,397 off). Numbers have been steady over the past four years, with total ridership as high as 6,546 and as low as 6,343. In 1999, however, numbers went up several thousand (to 10,159) due to Woodstock concert attendees arriving by rail. Rome last had ridership numbers approaching 10,000 in 1994.

## **Future Conditions**

*Rome Station* – To secure any future state or federal funding for the building's planned use as a transportation hub, if occupied, the offices must have a transportation use. Ideally, the city would like to attract a private transportation business as a tenant. In the short term, Centro may use the Rome train station as a regional maintenance facility for its Rome buses. In the long term, however, Centro would likely build a facility to serve all of Oneida County.

*Passenger Train Service* – City officials are hoping Amtrak can boost visitation to Rome, and Centro ridership, by offering weekend packages with a historic angle that feature Fort Stanwix, Erie Canal Village, and perhaps Turning Stone Resort and Casino. The mayor met with Amtrak officials in November 2005 to seek more stops for the station and for ways to better promote the city as a stop, and the City Marketing Director has talked to Turning Stone about possible packages.

The Empire State Passengers Association (ESPA), a 1,400 member rail user advocacy organization, introduced “A Vision for Passenger Rail and Public Transportation in New York State 2004-2008” to support their ongoing mission of improving passenger rail service and public transportation for travel in New York State. The ESPA’s long-term public transportation goal/recommendation that impacts the region is to extend rail service to Lake Placid from Amtrak connections in Utica.

Similar to the ESPA’s goal, Adirondack Scenic Railroad’s long-term goal is to complete the restoration of the 141-mile line from Utica to Lake Placid. The railroad also hopes to build its passenger base to 150,000 annually and provide not only recreation opportunities, but enable the railroad to deliver on-time transportation service to passengers traveling to Lake Placid. Restoring the line and building up the passenger base will require an estimated \$20 million. Currently, about half of the line – from Utica to Thendara and from Saranac Lake to Lake Placid – is active. The middle section from Thendara to Saranac Lake is under construction.

In the past, there have been conversations about creating a scenic railroad using historic rail cars that would link historic Erie Canal Village and downtown Rome.

The city is currently trying to secure funds to open a tunnel to public use that runs behind the train station underneath the tracks. If opened, bicycle and pedestrian trails could then be developed to connect the train station with the downtown area. However, the trail would have to cross the canal via an existing bridge, such as the Mill Street Bridge, or a new bridge.

## **Considerations and Recommendations**

- If approached, the park should work with partners to pursue the creation of packages that start at the Rome Train Station and include stops at the fort, Erie Canal Village, and possibly Turning Stone Resort and Casino.
- Though more a list of Adirondack attractions, the park could try to have the fort added as an area attraction on the Adirondack Scenic Railroad’s list of attractions (<http://www.adirondackrr.com/uticaattractions.htm>).

## Section 13: Aviation

*More visitation to the fort is likely if Oneida County Airport moves to Griffiss Airfield.*

### Current Conditions

The Oneida County Airport is located 7.5 miles southeast of the fort, between Utica and Rome. The airport is currently used for general aviation. Continental Connection was the last commercial carrier to service the airport, and their service was discontinued in 2002.

### Future Conditions

Oneida County Airport will be moving from its current location to Griffiss Airfield in Rome sometime within the next decade. The airport will be used for general aviation and as a maintenance, repair, and overhaul facility. The return of commercial flights to the county is a long-term goal.

### Considerations and Recommendations

- The park should try to have the fort added as an attraction with a link to the fort's web site on the Oneida County Airport's links page (<http://www.oneidacounty.org/oneidacty/gov/dept/airport/links.htm>).
- As the region attracts more companies and businesses and as Turning Stone Resort and Casino becomes more of a regional and perhaps national attraction, the likelihood that commercial flights will return to the region increases.
- The park should work with airport and city officials to be featured more prominently if the airport is moved to Griffiss Airfield, especially if commercial service is restored.

## Stakeholders

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As the nation's principal conservation agency, the Department of the Interior has the responsibility for most of our nationally owned public lands and natural resources. This includes fostering sound use of our land and water resources; protecting our fish, wildlife, and biological diversity; preserving the environmental and cultural values of our parks and historic places; and providing for the enjoyment of life through outdoor recreation. The department assesses our energy and mineral resources and works to ensure that their development is in the best interests of all our people by encouraging stewardship and citizen participation in their care. The department also has a major responsibility for American Indian reservation communities and for people who live in island territories under U.S. administration.